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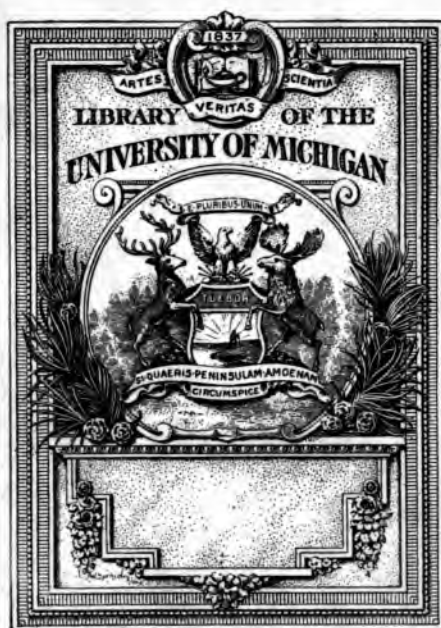
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# **YOUTH AND THE RACE**

**A STUDY IN THE  
PSYCHOLOGY OF ADOLESCENCE**

**BY THE SAME AUTHOR**

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**MIND IN THE MAKING**

**A Study in Mental Development**

**1 Volume. 12mo . . . net \$1.50**

# YOUTH AND THE RACE

A STUDY IN THE  
PSYCHOLOGY OF ADOLESCENCE

BY

EDGAR JAMES SWIFT

PROFESSOR OF PSYCHOLOGY AND EDUCATION IN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

SAINT LOUIS

AUTHOR OF "MIND IN THE MAKING"

*Superintendent*

NEW YORK  
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**Published September, 1912**



To  
MY WIFE

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To  
MY WIFE



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## PREFACE

The rôle which racial instincts play in the emotions, intellect, and will of children has been the subject of many investigations in recent years by those interested in the psychology of childhood. These studies, however, have had but slight effect upon the methods of the schools. This book is an attempt to show the possible application of some of these results to the education of children.

Teachers have followed the traditional methods of education which were adopted before the knowledge which we now have was available. The ideas and practice of the old English grammar-schools were brought to this country by those deeply imbued with belief in the natural depravity of children, and our educational methods have never recovered from the affliction.

The author has tried to indicate how the schools may help to transform into intellectual and moral forces the racial instincts which, as manifestations of original sin, distressed our forefathers.

Effort has also been made to fix the responsibility for conditions that cause these primitive impulses to continue dominant beyond the age when they should yield to social and ethical principles of action.

WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY,  
SAINT LOUIS, MO., *July*, 1912.

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## **YOUTH AND THE RACE**



# YOUTH AND THE RACE

## CHAPTER I

### THE SPIRIT OF ADVENTURE

ONE day two thirteen-year-old boys disappeared from their homes in Bath Beach. Six weeks later a Nebraska baker, into whose shop they went to buy some bread, concluding from the youngsters' dilapidated appearance that they had run away, drew from them the following story,<sup>1</sup> which they afterward repeated at their home.

"You see, I wanted to get rich and there wasn't any chance in Bath Beach," said Wilbur, who acted as spokesman. "I just sort of felt that I must see the world. I'd never been in any place but New York, and then I had to go with grown-up folks and was treated like a kid. The night we went away I didn't have a cent, but I wasn't afraid. I thought we only had to go out West and find a gold mine. Had I been reading books of adventure? Of course I had. That's about the only way you can get adventures at Bath Beach.

<sup>1</sup> *New York World*, September 3, 1906.

"We got on the train for New York, for we knew that was the starting-point for everywhere. Then we crossed the ferry and landed at the Lackawanna station in Hoboken. We hung around the freight cars for two days before we got a chance to steal a ride to Buffalo. We went mighty slow on the two dollars that Harry had, so we didn't live very high.

"Out of Buffalo we got a car for Chicago. And, say, the police are no good. Why, my mother sent out descriptions of me, and I used to pass the cops in all the cities we visited without dodging. They never even thought I looked suspicious.

"I don't think much of Chicago, and Buffalo's surely on the bum. You see, we stayed most of the time around the freight yards, but we made turns into the cities just so we could see the world.

"Of course, we didn't expect to strike it rich till we got West. When we left Chicago on a freight car we didn't stop at any more big cities.

"Goodness, but we had some terrible experiences! but I wasn't afraid. Once we were held up by two big fellows who were riding on the same freight car. Harry had a six-shooter, and the fellows wanted to get it. First they put their pistols to my head and told me to give up my six-shooter. When I said I didn't have one they started for Harry. He had slipped his pistol down

his trousers leg while they were after me and told them another fellow who was riding on the car had taken it. They went after him, and while they were at it, Harry and I jumped off and hid in the woods.

"We had a hard time on the freight cars. The railroad men kept chasing us and we fell off lots of times. I didn't get hurt much—just jarred up a bit—but I didn't care when I was hunting a fortune.

"We didn't have much to eat, and by the time we struck Wayside, Nebraska, we were getting pretty anxious to find our gold mine. We got a chance to work on the railroad for a few days, so we saved up some money. I didn't have any shoes or stockings and my shirt was all worn out. I bought a pair of long trousers to make me look taller.

"Then we started out to walk farther west, but we didn't come to any gold mines. Nothing but prairies everywhere. We walked and walked till we came to Crawford, Nebraska. One day I went into a bakery to buy food. It was our last fifty cents, and the man looked at me kind of funny and said, 'Haven't you run away?' I told him I had, and he was mighty good to us."

Wilbur and Harry were not abnormal boys. They loved their home and their parents, but they wanted excitement. They might have found this

in the nickelodeons and the alleys—the civilized successors of the woods and streams—but these did not satisfy them, and therein they showed their good stuff. They wanted adventures with the wild instead of with the policemen of Bath Beach. And having no opportunity to enjoy adventures at home they ran away to find them.

Civilization is young. Not very long ago man was wandering about from place to place, remaining in one spot only so long as a comfortable living could be secured for the tribe by hunting, or until driven away by superior enemies. It would be strange indeed if long ages of forest life, during which man laid aside his weapons only to enjoy what they had given him or to prepare for new conquests, should have left no impress on his descendants. But we are not dependent here upon mere conjecture. Let us delay for a moment to glance at some of the evidence.

Various writers<sup>1</sup> have called attention to certain fears for the existence of which only racial reasons can be offered. As illustrations we may mention fear in the woods after nightfall, though they are much safer to-day than many city streets where

<sup>1</sup> J. O. Quantz, "Dendro-Psychosis," *American Journal of Psychology*, vol. 9, p. 449. S. S. Buckman, "Babies and Monkeys," *Nineteenth Century*, vol. 36, 1894, p. 727. A. A. Mumford, "Survival Movements of Human Infancy," *Brain*, vol. 20, 1897, p. 290. L. Robinson, "Darwinism in the Nursery," *Nineteenth Century*, vol. 30, 1891, p. 831.

children and men do not have the same timidity; the instinctive fear of wild animals and harmless reptiles; fear of high winds, even among those who have never experienced cyclones or tornadoes; and agoraphobia, an inexplicable fear on any other basis than as a survival of the time when exposure in the open meant death.

Water also has played a tremendously important part among primitive people in their conceptions of life, as well as in folk literature, in philosophic speculation, and in religious cults. Professor Bolton<sup>1</sup> has collected a large amount of data showing the curious attitude of children toward water. All of it is rich in racial memories.

The play of children again offers strong *prima facie* evidence of the irresistible influence of this racial heritage. Investigations of the sports of primitive people always impress one with the fact that certain games are perennial. They are modified from age to age, but they are always the same old games. Spinning tops, archery, guessing games, hidden-ball, dice, ball and racket (in which the racket is strikingly like that used to-day in tennis), shinny, foot-ball, quoits, and cat's cradle are a few of those pictured by Mr. Stewart Culin<sup>2</sup> in his

<sup>1</sup> *American Journal of Psychology*, vol. 10, p. 169.

<sup>2</sup> "Twenty-fourth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, 1902-03." See also "The Study of Man," by Alfred C. Haddon.



interesting study of the games of the North American Indians.

No sport is so delightful to boys in the country and small towns, where land enough is available, as digging caves in which to conceal themselves from other boys or from which they may make sorties on neighboring orchards. The spoils of their raids are brought to their retreat with great glee and secrecy, perhaps in time to rot and be thrown away; but that does not matter. It was the fun of seizure, not the fruit, that they wanted.

Three boys, whom the writer knows, dig a large and deep hole in one of their gardens every fall. The top is covered with boards and a secret underground passage leads to the cavern. This passage is not long enough to afford any real concealment, but such is the deception of play. This cave is the winter rendezvous of the boys, and the coal cars of a railroad near by afford a never-failing source of fuel for the cave fire.

A group of boys, in age from ten to twelve, with whom the writer camped one summer, found keen delight in building wigwams out of the branches of trees, and in making a "one-night shelter" by bending down a small tree and piling branches around it so as to protect their heads and bodies from the "rain," while their feet were kept warm by means of a small camp-fire.

Any one who has had contact with boys in the open can duplicate these instances many times over. They illustrate the natural flow of primitive impulses which have not been dammed up and turned into civilization's alleys.

The methods by which these racial instincts may be utilized in the development of boys, instead of being encouraged to function in a non-social way, will be discussed in subsequent chapters, but first it is desirable to see the result of failure to provide conditions suitable to their healthful expression. The following items are taken from newspapers. If they lack the exactness in details usual in newspaper reports, they are nevertheless true in essential facts. The names of the children and sometimes other unessential statements are omitted.

*Case 1.*—Residents of Jardine Place, Brooklyn, complained to the police yesterday that a gang of boys, whose ages range from fifteen to twenty, had left their homes in the district and become pirates, living in a cave on a vacant lot in Jardine Place. It was said that the gang had look-outs posted and lived by looting the neighboring houses of milk and rolls and anything else they could find. Incidentally they accosted unsuspecting youths and lured them to the pirates' lair, where they mulcted them of various sums by playing poker. The game, the victims averred, always seemed to be on the side of the pirates.

A policeman in plain clothes stalked the juvenile bandits at 8 p. m. last night, and discovered that the cave had been excavated fully twenty feet into the ground. The boys all carried tin battle-axes and dark-lanterns, and used strange terms that were supposed to have been in vogue

two hundred years ago on the Spanish Main. Sentries were posted, and the password for the night was "Sparum Poco."

Not daring to use such strange words, the officer wriggled through the tall grass and weeds in Indian fashion. With his ear to the ground, he heard one of the pirates say, "Three ladies and a pair of knaves." To which another answered, "Fade away. I've got four bullets. The pot's mine." Two of the boys were arrested and taken to the police station. The other "pirates" escaped.<sup>1</sup>

*Case 2.*—A twelve-year-old boy, known among his companions as "Chief Yockel, King of the Bandits," gave the police reserves of the Morrisania Station several hours of worry yesterday when he hid himself in a cave of rocks and refused to come out. After the heavy stones had been removed by the police and a gang of Italian laborers, Chief Yockel was locked up in a cell on a charge made by his mother that he was incorrigible.

"My pals wouldn't stick by me; they all went home," he sobbed as he was being locked up.

For several weeks Chief Yockel and his companions have been using the cave in a lot at Fox Street and Saint John's Avenue as a place to read dime novels and play Indian. The cave was about ten feet deep and the entrance was so small that only one boy could enter at a time.

Monday afternoon, Yockel discovered his mother's pocket-book on the kitchen table. In it was twenty dollars. Quickly the "Chief" gathered his followers, and announced that the time had come to celebrate. In the mean time the boy's mother missed him and her purse.

Shortly after eight o'clock this morning an uncle of the boy saw the "Chief" seated near the cave in which he had slept all night. He started after him, but the young Indian wriggled through the opening and refused to come out. Yockel appealed to the police. The captain of the Morrisania Station appealed to a gang of laborers across the street, and the work of pulling the rocks away began.

<sup>1</sup> *New York Times*, September 5, 1908.

The police and the laborers were afraid to work fast, for the whole structure might give way and the boy in the cave be crushed if the keystone rock were moved. After an hour's work, the boy's legs could be seen, and the police tried to throw a noose around them. But the "Chief" was prepared for this emergency, and when the rope slipped across his feet he cut it. After another hour's work the rocks were removed and the boy was dragged from the cave and taken to the police station.<sup>1</sup>

*Case 3.*—The Wild West dreams of five Saint Louis boys, whose ages range from eleven to sixteen years, suddenly terminated yesterday afternoon, when they were rounded up by Saint Louis County officers, while the boys were sitting around their camp-fire formulating plans and telling thrilling stories. The leader of the band led the constable a chase of over a mile, in which the officer fired half a dozen shots before he captured the boy.

The youngsters were camping in the woods about fifty feet from the Rock Island Railroad tracks, east of Clayton. The spot they had selected to board an outbound freight was at the bottom of a steep incline, where the train is brought nearly to a stop.

Each of the boys had a sharp knife. They all had timetables of railroads, and were figuring on reaching Texas within two weeks. They carried two loaves of bread and a pound of butter in a sack, besides a pair of new shoes and a carriage-robe. Two of the boys had on two pairs of trousers. They had a pack of playing-cards, with which they said they intended to amuse themselves while in camp. They also had a package of pins, several needles, and a spool of thread.

One of the boys said that he had bought the shoes found in the sack, but that they hurt his feet and he had to take them off. They were number ten, and the pair the lad had on were about number five. The young adventurers claimed that they found the carriage-robe. They had eighty-three cents among them, but said that they expected to get more money.

<sup>1</sup> *New York Times*, March 9, 1910.

When the constable asked them if they expected to get more money by holding up a train, they replied, "Oh, maybe we would do that, or else crack a crib and blow wid de cash."<sup>1</sup>

*Case 4.*—Five boys, ranging from fourteen to fifteen years old, were arraigned before Justice Hoyt, sitting in the Children's Court, yesterday, charged with improper guardianship. After the judge had heard their stories, they were remanded to the Children's Society until Saturday.

On Tuesday afternoon a policeman of the West Forty-seventh Street Station saw the boys acting suspiciously in the freight yard of the New York Central Railroad at the foot of West Fifty-seventh Street. He watched them for some time and saw the five climb into an empty freight car attached to a train that had just started to move. He then arrested them.

When the boys were searched, an emergency kit was found containing one roll of six-inch gauze bandages, two boxes of pills, one package of court-plaster, two bottles of cough-mixture, two bologna-sausage rings, and three loaves of bread.

In court yesterday the one who acted as spokesman said that they had formed a club some time ago to get the necessary things to beat their way West. When asked what they intended to do with the bandages, he said, "You can't tell what will happen to you when you get West, and we didn't want to take any chances. We figured that we could get grub from somewhere, but if we got mixed up in a wreck or caught cold, bandages and medicines would be the things we would need."

Their parents said the boys had been model children.<sup>2</sup>

*Case 5.*—The efforts of two boys, fifteen and sixteen years of age, from New Rochelle, New York, to lead a frontier life came to an end last night when the Portland police raided the camp they had built in the woods. The policemen confiscated pistols and lassos and took the boys to the police station.

<sup>1</sup> *Saint Louis Globe-Democrat*, January 8, 1909.

<sup>2</sup> *New York Times*, May 5, 1910.

The officers had received word from relatives of the boys to look for them in this section, and learned of their camp through word brought by trappers. They had built a rough hut of small logs, and, as they had a little money, had been living well. They were loth to leave their comfortable quarters.<sup>1</sup>

*Case 6.*—Thinking that it would be fun to frighten one of their schoolfellows by sending him a Black-Hand letter, two New York boys, fourteen years old, wrote a note to another boy, the son of wealthy parents, demanding ten dollars and threatening death if it were not forthcoming.

The letter was signed, "King of the Black Hand," and was profusely ornamented with skulls, cross-bones, and daggers.

Two detectives were ordered to find the writer. The boys who had sent the letter smilingly came to the detectives and told them that they had written it for fun. To their great astonishment they were immediately arrested and locked up.<sup>2</sup>

*Case 7.*—Moving pictures illustrating cow-boy life interested a fourteen-year-old youngster to the point of emulation as he sat in the "Mystic Arcade." As soon as the lights were turned on he jumped up, pushed his two boy companions out into the aisle, and, pulling from his hip-pocket a revolver, pointed it at their feet and called out, "Dance, you tender-feet."

There were two hundred people, mostly women and children, in the theatre, and so lustily did the boy shout, and so freely did he swing his pistol, that there arose a commotion on all sides. Women screamed and made for the doors.

The manager of the theatre came hurrying down the aisle. The boy swung the revolver in line with him.

"Hands up," he called. The manager took one jump over the orchestra railing and dived behind the piano.

A patrolman of the Fourth Avenue Station saw women

<sup>1</sup> *New York Times*, June 27, 1910.

<sup>2</sup> *Saint Louis Post-Dispatch*, February 11, 1910.

hurrying out of the theatre. He ran in, saw the revolver, and made for it. The boy, seeing him come, quietly held out the pistol reversed.

"Well, partner," said he, "I guess you've got the drop on me."

The policeman took him to the station and there found that the pistol was not loaded. They sent the boy to the Children's Society as a juvenile delinquent and will arraign him to-day in the Children's Court.<sup>1</sup>

*Case 8.*—Two boys, aged twelve and thirteen, who said they ran away from their homes in Jacksonville, Illinois, to emulate Robinson Crusoe and live in a little hut in some big woods, subsisting only on fish, were arrested yesterday morning at Main and Vine Streets, hungry as bears and crying because of the cold and exposure. They said that they had walked from Jacksonville, and, as their parents would not have enough money to send for them, requested that they be cared for by the police. They were sent to the House of Detention.<sup>2</sup>

A pleasant home with kind parents whose chief concern is the happiness and welfare of their children is sometimes thought to be the best antidote for juvenile escapades, but the desire for adventure is not limited to any one class of boys, as is shown by the following:

*Case 9.*—The thirteen-year-old son of a prominent New York architect, who disappeared from his home on Riverside Drive yesterday, walked into the home of his uncle in Washington, D. C., this morning and said that he was almost starved. The boy was chilled to the bone, since, in the course of his adventures, he had sold his overcoat to buy a steam-boat ticket to Europe.

The lad was highly pleased when he learned that his dis-

<sup>1</sup> *New York Times*, January 31, 1909.

<sup>2</sup> *Saint Louis Globe-Democrat*, January 29, 1912.

appearance had aroused fears that he had gone to the East Side and fallen into the clutches of the Black Hand, and his expression indicated that he would have done just that if he had thought of it.

What he had done, however, was to leave New York for the purpose of seeing the world. He reached Philadelphia yesterday. But the city did not suit him, so he decided to go to Europe. He walked down to the wharves and priced out-bound passage. A ticket, he discovered, cost more money than he had, so he sold his overcoat to make up the difference. Then he marched aboard, only to be held up by the captain, questioned, and sent ashore.

He then started for Washington, where he arrived late last night. Wandering around near the Union Station—he seems at first to have had no idea of appealing to his relatives—he came to the house of the captain of the Senate Office Building police force and asked for a room. He was taken in, but the officer became suspicious and questions followed. The boy then told of his adventures, and early this morning, on the advice of his new friend, the boy took a trolley for his uncle's home.<sup>1</sup>

When opportunity for adventures of a legitimate and wholesome sort is not given, city life, cheap novels, and low-grade shows have their way of supplying the deficiency, and the racial instincts may then culminate in actions much more serious than running away from home to lead a frontier life, sending Black-Hand letters, or flourishing an empty revolver. The following are illustrations:

*Case 1.*—The arrest of five boys, one of whom was ten years old, two others twelve, while the fourth and fifth were fourteen and nineteen, revealed the attempt of these youngsters last Saturday to wreck the early New Haven Railroad train

<sup>1</sup> *New York Times*, January 22, 1912.



leaving New York shortly after noon. The purpose, as they confessed, was to loot the bodies of the dead and injured. They got as far as opening the switch, near the East Portchester freight yard, having either found or stolen the key.

That their plan did not succeed was due to the fact that a switchman happened to see them throw the switch and closed it in time to avert an accident.

The train they wanted to wreck carries one of the special club cars on which travel a score or more of multi-millionaires who have homes either in Greenwich or Stamford and who come out early on Saturdays.

The probation officers and prosecuting attorney stood aghast this morning when one of the boys coolly told of the plot and stated that the reason of the attempted crime was the hope of getting a few dollars from the pockets of the dead and wounded.

The boys further told of having formed a regular organization which imposed elaborate oaths of secrecy and a part of whose formula consisted in crossing their hearts never to tell any of the deeds that any member of the gang perpetrated. These oaths did not interfere with their desire to confess when they had once been thoroughly frightened.

The crime, the boys said, was inspired by a moving-picture show that portrayed a train hold-up.<sup>1</sup>

*Case 2.*—A thirteen-year-old boy from the Bronx, having learned from a moving-picture show the first steps in burglary, went out on Saturday night with a brace and bit to gather in some candy for himself and friends. He had his eye on a candy store in the East Chester Station of the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad. He bored holes all around the lock of the door and then cut it out. Loading himself with eight dollars' worth of candy he withdrew.

A detective of the Westchester Station, who had been assigned to the case, found a plethora of candy in the morning and learned that the youngster had given it to his friends. The boy was at home when the officer reached there. Upon

<sup>1</sup> *Saint Louis Post-Dispatch*, March 1, 1910.

arrest for juvenile delinquency he told the detective that he got his idea of burglary from an East Chester moving-picture show.<sup>1</sup>

*Case 3.*—Classes at the Humboldt and Assumption schools were excited Tuesday when policemen entered and arrested two boys, one thirteen years of age and the other eleven, who were accused of stealing seventy-five dollars from a grocery store Sunday afternoon.

The boys confessed and implicated another boy fifteen years old. He was arrested at his home, where something over forty-five dollars was found concealed in a mustard bottle in the attic.

The boys gained entrance through the back door of the grocery, which was guarded by an iron bar.

The thirteen-year-old lad bought a pair of roller-skates and a camera, and hired a buggy in which he took a girl driving Sunday afternoon. Four dollars in pennies, which he disdained to spend, he gave to a small boy.

The boys are locked up at the Souldard Street Station.<sup>2</sup>

*Case 4.*—Two small boys, one thirteen years of age and the other nine, were arrested in New York and sent to the Children's Society, charged with having sent a "Black-Hand" letter to a wealthy woman. The letter was as follows:

We demand \$2,500 as a Black Hand organization. If it is not paid we will blow up your home and all your family. We have four hundred and eighty-eight members scattered all over the world. You cannot escape us. Don't let the police know of this, or any one else, for, if you do, we will not let up on you if you offer us \$100,000. Rich people pay our demands, and they have no more bother, because we protect them. Do as we ask or we will blow up your home and destroy every one in it with revolver or dagger, or send them poisoned food.

<sup>1</sup> *New York Times*, June 6, 1910.

<sup>2</sup> *Saint Louis Post-Dispatch*, March 24, 1908.

There was a break in the letter here to make room for the picture of a dagger-pierced heart, a revolver, and a bottle marked "poison." Then the letter continued:

After you pay \$2,500 you will be free from all expense. Take twenty-five \$100 bills on Thursday evening, between 8 and 9 P. M. Deposit the money in a tin box and place it under some leaves on the ground close to the park wall at the first light post at the right hand of the small entrance to Central Park, between Sixty-sixth and Sixty-seventh Streets, opposite your house, and let it stay there till you get a letter from us that we received it.

BLACK HAND.

On the advice of detectives the woman decided to carry out the instructions. Disguised officers were to follow her.

Shortly before nine o'clock last night she stepped from her house, crossed Fifth Avenue to the park, and deposited a tin box under some leaves by the park wall. The detectives watched her until she returned to the house. Then from behind the park wall they took up their vigil. It was some minutes after nine o'clock before they were rewarded by seeing two boys walk down Fifth Avenue and poke beneath the leaves. Finally the larger boy came upon the box and together the youngsters started off on Fifth Avenue.

The detectives followed them for a block or so and then pounced upon the two, separating them immediately so that they could not converse and neither one could hear what questions were asked of the other. The smaller boy wept bitterly as he felt the officer's hand on his shoulder and began to scream and cry for his mother. The elder boy, who still clutched the box, took his arrest stoically.

"What's in the box, kid?" asked the detective of the elder boy.

"I don't know what's in it," replied the lad. "A man I met at Seventeenth Street and Third Avenue offered me a quarter to come and get this for him."

"What did he look like?" asked the officer.

"Why, he was a tall man with a black mustache."

The other officer meantime was asking the same questions of the younger boy, and got the same replies until he asked for a description of the man.

"He looks just like you," whimpered the little chap.

This officer had no mustache. Convinced also by the actions of the boys that they had written the letter, the detectives took them to the Children's Society.

The older boy had a lot of cigarette pictures, such as come in packages of certain brands of cigarettes, and a list of dime novels, blood-thirsty ones, to judge by their titles. He was anything but blood-thirsty himself, however, when he was ushered into the society's rooms.<sup>1</sup>

*Case 5.*—Two brothers, ten and fifteen years old, respectively, were arrested in an Illinois town by a deputy sheriff on a charge of placing an obstruction on a railroad track to wreck a train.

It is alleged they put twenty large spikes between the ends of two rails, wedged in such a manner that they would in all probability have wrecked a fast passenger train which was due but a few minutes from the time the spikes were discovered.

A workman saw the boys running away and discovered the obstruction, which was a short distance above the depot at Loraine. He removed the spikes and reported the matter.

There was snow on the ground and the boys were tracked to their place of concealment.<sup>2</sup>

*Case 6.*—Many daring burglaries in Pittsburg are charged against three brothers, the youngest seven years old and the oldest under fifteen, who are now locked up in the South Side

<sup>1</sup> *New York Times*, February 25, 1909.

<sup>2</sup> *Saint Louis Post-Dispatch*, March 2, 1908.

Police Station. For two days policemen had been tracing them.

Eight Mount Washington homes are said to have been entered by them during the last three nights. Much valuable booty was secured and hidden away in the dark recesses of an abandoned coal mine just across the Monongahela River from Pittsburg. There they lived like brigands and planned their night attacks on South Side houses.

Partly burned candles, with which they had lighted their rendezvous, food, knives, bayonets, and swords were among the things found by the police when they searched the cave.<sup>1</sup>

While adventures that girls seek are usually different from those enjoyed by boys, still this sex differentiation does not always occur in early girlhood, as is shown by the following press clippings:

*Case 1.*—A woman, whose home is in Marion, Illinois, has asked the chief of police to assist her in finding her daughter, fourteen years old, who disappeared from her home a week ago, after telling some of her girl friends that she proposed to become a female detective. The girl took twenty-three dollars in cash with her.

Just before she left home she wrote to her best girl friend and told her of her intentions. After she arrived in Saint Louis, she mailed another postal card to her chum, but there was no indication of where the girl was living in this city.

The conductor of the train on which the girl came to Saint Louis told the police that she represented herself to be an orphan and said that she was on her way to visit an aunt. She paid her fare and the conductor gave her no special attention.<sup>2</sup>

*Case 2.*—A twelve-year-old girl, the daughter of a well-to-do brick mason, confessed yesterday in the Children's Court that,

<sup>1</sup> *New York Times*, June 28, 1910.

<sup>2</sup> *Saint Louis Post-Dispatch*.

twice during the week, she had set fire to the apartment house in which she lived. The reason which she gave was that she had seen such things pictured on the screen of a Bronx moving-picture theatre.

The child admitted that it was she who had written a threatening letter which was found tied to the door-knob of her father's apartment, and in which she demanded fifty dollars as the price needed to keep her from burning up the house and everybody in it. She also laid the Black Hand part of her scheme to moving pictures.

On Monday a fire was started in some rubbish that had been placed by the girl in the hallway on the second floor. The fire was discovered by a tenant, and was extinguished without the aid of the firemen. The next day a second fire was started near the same place. Again the tenants were able to put it out before the firemen arrived.

The tenants realized that an incendiary was at work and were greatly concerned, many of them remaining up all night Tuesday to watch. The police were notified, as was also the fire marshal. A detective was assigned to the case, and early Wednesday morning he went to the house with the fire marshal to investigate.

The father of the child turned over to them a letter which he had found tied to his door-knob that morning. The letter read:

"If you don't put fifty dollars under the door-mat we will burn your home and everybody in it.

"BLACK HAND."

The detective saw that the letter was in the handwriting of a child, and he questioned every child in the apartment house. When it came little Ethel's turn to be quizzed she at first denied the authorship, but when she was shown that she wrote the same kind of a hand as that in which the letter was written she broke down and confessed.

"I saw a moving picture in which there was a fire and people were rescued," the child sobbed, "and I also saw one where the Black Hand tried to get money. I don't know why I did it, but I did not mean to do wrong."

The parents of the child were the most surprised of all the tenants at the confession.<sup>1</sup>

*Case 3.*—Two girl highway robbers are being sought by the police of Newark for holding up a number of young girls on the street and taking money from them.

Both the girl bandits are described as about fifteen years old, well dressed, and pretty. For the past several nights the young robbers have been operating through the streets of Newark in the crowded district of Broad and Market Streets. Their victims in every instance were children who were sent on errands with money.

One of the girls held the victim while the other tore her pocket-book from her hand. The girl who took the purse extracted the money, threw the pocket-book in the owner's face, and walked away.<sup>2</sup>

*Case 4.*—A girl, thirteen years old, is in jail at Cuyahoga Falls, charged with attempted bank robbery. She will be brought to the county jail to-night. This afternoon she entered the Falls Savings Bank armed with a revolver. She asked for the cashier, but he was out, and the assistant was in charge. She sat in the outer office for a few moments, then approached the man at the window, and, levelling the gun at his head, said:

"Give me the money in those vaults."

The man was startled, but replied that the vaults were closed and he could not open them.

"Then give me what you have in your pockets," was her next demand.

"I have no money," he answered.

Disappointed, the young bank robber hesitated, backed to the door, and started down the street on the run. She was arrested later by a policeman.

The girl lives at the Falls and is of a respectable family.

<sup>1</sup> *New York Times*, July 15, 1910.

<sup>2</sup> *New York World*, September 3, 1906.

She has been impatient of parental restraint and is fond of Wild West literature.<sup>1</sup>

*Case 5.*—A girl fourteen years of age wound up an exciting escapade of two days at Niles, Michigan, this afternoon by calmly going to sleep, after she had been locked up, charged with horse-stealing. She had given her parents and friends a terrible fright.

Stimulated only by cookies and confections and her own lively imagination, the young miss carried through her lark with a high-handed disregard for consequences. She rented a horse and buggy at a Niles livery, after running away from home yesterday. Then she made a round of several bakery shops and confectionery stores and loaded the buggy with pies, cakes, and candies. Thus provisioned, she started out to see the country.

She drove seven miles to Buchanan before nightfall. Near Buchanan she stabled her horse and spent a comfortable night at a farm-house, after inventing a story to satisfy the farmer that she was not a runaway.

To-day she resumed her trip, stopping occasionally to rest her horse and to open a fresh bag of sweets. By the middle of the afternoon she had covered the thirty miles between Buchanan and Michigan City.

"I don't care," the girl remarked, when told that a telegram had been sent her father. "I certainly have had the time of my life."

When her father and an officer from Niles arrived here to-night they found the child asleep. She was taken reluctantly home an hour later.<sup>2</sup>

The following are more typical of girls' adventures, representing, as they do, their desire to do—or pretend to do—the thing that makes them socially conspicuous in their set. In the first in-

<sup>1</sup> *Saint Louis Republic*, July 12, 1911.

<sup>2</sup> *New York Times*, August 12, 1911.



stance it was automobiling. This also illustrates the enjoyment which girls experience in finery. The story of having been kidnapped was invented to account for the possession of an automobile dress which the child had purchased after long economy. Besides the enjoyment which she herself would derive from the dress, though she might never have an opportunity to ride in an automobile, its possession, together with suitable stories, would enable her to boast to her playmates about her rides. After purchasing the dress, however, she found it necessary to account to her parents for such a useless garment. How she did this will be seen in the following newspaper account:

*Case 1.*—Numbered trading-stamps led to the collapse of the remarkable fiction, worthy of a moving-picture dramatist, by which a girl of twelve explained her absence from home from Monday morning until Tuesday morning. She wrote a confession Wednesday and signed it in the presence of her mother and detectives, in which she declared the story of being kidnapped in an automobile by two men to be a pure fabrication, conceived by her own imagination.

Trading-stamps were found in her possession on her return to her home, and she explained them by saying they were given with a cheap automobile dress and veil which the men by whom she was supposed to have been kidnapped purchased for her.

From the number on the stamps it was learned that the sale was made at a certain large department store, and the clerk remembered that the girl made the purchases herself. She now admits she bought the dress and veil with money she had saved during several months.

She says that she invented the story to excuse her truancy from school. The narrative was crammed with thrills. It began on her way to school, when an automobile panted up beside the pavement, and a man sprang out, gagged her with a handkerchief, and bundled her into the machine. His companion in the automobile poured a liquid on the handkerchief, which she knew was chloroform, because it put her to sleep.

She awoke in a West End lodging house, according to her story, and the men were with her. They then chloroformed her again. She awoke in the morning and the new clothes were given to her.

The men discarded the automobile for a storm buggy and drove her to Union Station, telling her she was to be taken to Chicago and would never see Saint Louis again.

Not until she was on the train did she succeed in eluding them, by pretending to want a drink and slipping out of the car while on the errand.<sup>1</sup>

Another instance which was reported to the writer is exceedingly interesting in the wealth of fancy woven into the play as it was acted by the girl.

*Case 2.*—The girl was sixteen years of age. She was the daughter of respectable, hard-working parents. Her father kept a small shop and by frugality and close attention to business maintained his family in comfortable circumstances and sent his children to school. The town was so large that the school children knew nothing about the home life of many of their associates. This enabled the daughter to weave the following exhilarating romance into her life.

Her father and mother, the girl told her school associates, spent most of their time in Europe. When they were not travelling abroad they lived in their summer cottage in Michigan, and, by way of helping the imagination of her

<sup>1</sup> *Saint Louis Post-Dispatch*, March 2, 1910.

friends to picture her luxury, she showed photographs which she had purchased of a pretty summer cottage.

She arranged a girls' box party at the theatre, at her own expense, and invited one of the teachers to accompany them as chaperon. The money to defray the expenses was skilfully purloined from the till of her father's shop which she was required to tend after close of school. Of course, her guests must be supplied with flowers, but this caused no serious difficulty, as a relative kept a greenhouse in which she was frequently left alone. The box party became somewhat complex, however, because she could only tell her family that she was going to the theatre, and her mother, naturally, could not allow her to go alone. But she was equal to the emergency and proposed that her older sister accompany her. On their arrival she told her sister that one of the teachers was giving a box party and had invited her to sit with them. She then joined her school friends and chaperon in the box.

Of course, the romance would not have been complete without a devoted young admirer. So she gave her girl friends the name of one of the officers of the street railway company, which she found on a transfer. Occasionally she pointed him out, always selecting some young man who was just disappearing in the distance. She also displayed flowers which he had sent to her, roses that she had secretly taken from the greenhouse of her relative. Several times she said that he had invited her to take a drive with him and had told her to ask a girl friend to accompany them. A sudden message, however, invariably called him back to business, and his disappearing form was always pointed out. Meanwhile he had left the horse and carriage—which she had hired with money taken from her father's money drawer—in front of the school building.

It was a pretty little play of an imaginative, adolescent girl who found the monotony of tending shop and doing housework inadequate to her romantic years. Of course, she was discovered at

last and her parents, in chagrin, withdrew her from school. She is now watching the shop again, a quiet, sedate young woman.

We judge acts according to the standardized estimate of the worth or execrability of the deed, and for that reason we are usually mistaken in our judgment. Were ethics so simple it would never have become so perplexing as to require volumes to elucidate a theory with as many more for its refutation. Life is entanglingly complex. Traditions, beliefs arising in the social and religious institutions of the past, and racial vestiges which express themselves in instinctive tendencies, combat one another with their contradictions, to puzzle the thoughtful and obscure the right course of action. To the unthinking, life is all quite plain, or at any rate easily defined. "Don't fear to ax for what you want," said John Bloom.<sup>1</sup> "There's no rule against axing. There's no rule anywhere, an' good an' bad's a toss up. You may pull a prize out of your life—or you may not. Everything's run by chance, according to the plan of Providence."

The very fact that unmitigated condemnation of these attempts at adventure presupposes underlying simplicity of impulse is alone sufficient to throw doubt upon the correctness of the judgment.

<sup>1</sup> "The Secret Woman," by Eden Phillpotts.

The motives leading to human action are never simple, and they rarely reveal themselves to superficial observers. This is the reason for the rule of skilful detectives never to accept the simple explanation of a crime. "Always distrust appearances; believe precisely the contrary of what appears true, or even probable," said Tiraucclair to the young Lecoq.

In trying to ascertain whether love for the wild and the spirit of adventure have any racial justification for existence, it is first necessary to examine the attitude of young children toward certain natural phenomena. This was briefly done, and investigations in support of the position were cited in an earlier part of this chapter. Such racial justification having been discovered, education must take account of the fact and provide for the gratification of these instincts, because they represent the first break from the animal cunning of man's arboreal ancestors—nature's first attempt at something higher than brute ethics—as well as for the reason that if allowed to mature without control, these instincts retain all their primitive non-social or anti-social characteristics.

On the other hand, if the education of boys is so planned as to furnish an outlet for this racial energy through sports and serious activities that involve social relations, while still satisfying the

craving for excitement and adventure, these same instincts then become powerful educative forces. As the psychical characteristics by which early man maintained his existence and gained supremacy over the beasts from which these traits alone separated him, they are the beginning of human mind and the source of all positive, modern virtues.

In judging the behavior of children it is important to remember that the higher cerebral centres are just beginning to secure the control which at maturity should be theirs. Primitive impulses are still rampant. Principles of conduct do not yet possess the boy. The racial mind is contending for supremacy with modern ethics and culture. Even in the adult this control of the higher centres is at times relaxed, and then the unrelenting fierceness of our early ancestors reveals itself in all its cruelty. Illustrations are almost superfluous. During the French Revolution men carried away the hearts of their victims as proof of their prowess, and exhibited as trophies the heads which had been hacked off with pocket-knives. Lest these acts may be thought characteristic of a peculiar people in an earlier, less thoughtful age, the writer may, perhaps, be pardoned for recalling the brutal fight for souvenirs over the dead body of aeronaut Johnstone, at Denver, Colorado, November 17, 1910. "One of the broken wooden stays had gone almost

through Johnstone's body. Before doctors or police could reach the scene, one man had torn this splinter from the body and run away, carrying his trophy with the aviator's blood still dripping from its ends. Frantic, the crowd tore away the canvas from over his body and fought for the gloves that had protected his hands from the cold."<sup>1</sup>

Such acts as these, revolting as they are, do not necessarily indicate degeneracy. They show the ancient savage let loose in modern man, and when that happens the veneer of culture and altruism acquired during the comparatively few years of civilization cannot restrain the brute. Gaining trophies is one way of emitting glory, and there was little that primitive man would not do or give for this distinction. The Indians' enjoyment of scalping was due less to the delights of torture—for they knew ways of producing more exquisite suffering—than to the satisfaction of securing trophies, and the modern souvenir mania has the same psychical basis.

Fortunately, cruelty is not the aspect of the racial mind which causes most concern for children. With them it is oftener the careless unconcern about the more serious matters of life, and the insatiable longing of the primitive soul for something new and exciting. Like savages, children are both

<sup>1</sup> *Saint Louis Globe-Democrat*, November 18, 1910.

readily entertained and easily bored. Life must be spirited or they will break its bounds and find their own adventures. This was the motive in the instances cited in the early part of this chapter, and it was the cause of the following interesting little adventure:

The "Cave Club," as it is called, has been unearthed by the truant officer. The cave was built a month ago by four youngsters ranging in age from eight to twelve, to shelter them from the cold during the winter months so they would not have to stay indoors. When built it was about eight feet square. Yesterday morning the boys enlarged it on account of the increasing membership, which now totals eleven.

The cave is provided with chairs, benches, stove, and lamps, while the dirt walls are covered with pictures. It looks very comfortable, and will provide a warm place during the cold afternoons. If one did not know of the cave it would be hard to find. It was dug in the yellow clay, and after the top was laid with heavy boards it was covered with dirt. The stove-pipe just reaches the level of the roof and can be seen only from a short distance.

The three boys who were in the cave yesterday afternoon said they played hookey sometimes and had used the cave as a hiding place while they were working on it, but now that they have it completed they are not going to play hookey any more, as they are afraid they will be found out and the cave destroyed.<sup>1</sup>

The problem, then, seems to be to give boys the adventures which they crave without encouraging reversion to the primitive, ancestral type. There is abundant evidence that this can be done, but

<sup>1</sup> *Saint Louis Globe-Democrat*, November 22, 1910.



the most striking instance, perhaps, is that of the Boy Scouts. The success of this movement has been so remarkable that the enthusiasm which it creates must spring from deeper sources than those that supply the transitory interest in many activities. What has worked the miracle of making boys willing to give up their old life of lying, and stealing, and running away from school? Some have thought it the uniform. "Stick a boy into a uniform," they say, "and you can do anything with him." Can you? Try a prison garb and see what happens. It is what the uniform stands for that determines its effect. Plan a piece of work so that it will involve some physical activity and authority. It does not much matter what the work is. Then gather together a few boys, tell them that you need their help, put responsibility on them, and they are ready for business.

Not long ago, about half a dozen urchins were making life miserable for the fruit venders and street-car conductors in a crowded district of one of our cities. Car windows were broken, conductors stoned, and fruit was stolen. The policemen were powerless, because the boys vanished immediately after committing the offence. A young man in the neighborhood said that he would stop the disturbances if the police department would agree not to prosecute the offenders when they were caught.

The chief smiled compassionately at his innocence, but, being helpless, he let him have his way. A club, called "The Boys' Protective Society," was organized from the lads of the neighborhood. The members met once a week in a rented hall, played games, and organized for their work. One night the leader of the gang of toughs was caught in the act of overturning a fruit stand. As it was a choice between arrest and accompanying his captors he yielded. Indeed, the whole affair struck him as rather entertaining. It certainly was an easy way to escape a night in jail. He was taken to the hall and messengers were at once despatched to summon the members of the club. A court was organized and the prisoner found guilty. The question of punishment was a serious problem, and the captive, understanding their perplexity, smiled in derision. But the boys were equal to the situation and sentenced him to be an "outcast." They told him that they would not play with him, that they would not even speak to him on the street. He said he didn't care, and went out with a very haughty air. The next day, Saturday, the boys of the neighborhood gathered for their usual base-ball game on a vacant lot. While they were organizing for the game the prisoner of the night before arrived and was at once chosen by the leader of one of the sides, who was not a club member.

The boys belonging to the club then left the field. Only two remained to keep the "outcast" company, and they were not members of the club. At the next meeting of the society the following note from the former prisoner was presented: "If yez will let me jin yer club I won't do nothing any more and will play yer way." He was elected to membership and at the next meeting he brought three of his old associates and begged that they be admitted. From that time fruit dealers and car conductors had peace.

There is no inconsistency in boys trading misdemeanors for social service, provided the latter is equally virile. The destructive, anti-social impulses express the racial need for self-assertion, for aggressive action. Paradoxical as it may seem, with boys destruction is construction. They are trying out a plan of campaign against their enemies. It is not always necessary that the "enemy" shall have committed unfriendly acts, since boys look upon adults as a peculiar people who are trying to coerce them into actions against which their racial instincts rebel. They want to do things which show their power, and the most natural object against which they can pit their resources is that strangely unnatural creature, civilized man, whose occupations are so tame and uneventful, and who always cries, "Peace! Peace!" They are

living through the period of the race when survival depends upon eternal vigilance and ceaseless activity. But action is the one thing which is left out of account in the home and school. Naturally, then, children find their own field of operations, and since primitive instincts, when undirected, tend to reinstate the life of our savage ancestors, conflict with modern civilization ensues.

We have said that the fundamental problem in training boys consists in furnishing adventures without encouraging reversion. The club of Boy Scouts does this, both by the suggestion given in the name and by the demand for readiness to act in emergencies. Adventures need not be spectacular to meet the requirements. Boys will tramp through the woods with guns, without firing a shot, until ready to drop from exhaustion, and enjoy every minute. The imagination helps amazingly, provided it has something to work upon. Scouting is the cue for countless racial reminiscences. Though the uniform is not necessary, it furthers the play of the imagination. The "adventures" that come with emergency calls, as well as those which the adolescent mind easily thinks into drill exercises of a military sort, give the boys opportunity to show off. All of this appeals to the racial instincts, and whatever has their support draws its power from an exhaustless reservoir of energy.

Social virtues, which boys honestly intend to practise some day, when they reach the dry, spiritless age of their teachers and parents, now acquire the irresistible force of race enthusiasm. They are thrifty, and truthful, and studious, because these virtues are a part of the Scout's honor.

Organization into scouts is not the only means of transforming racial tendencies into educative forces. Responsibility, freedom to manage things, is what boys want. All sorts of racial emotions cluster around the idea of authority. The teacher may suggest, but the suggestion must be so subtle that the children think the plan their own. Then it takes possession of them and they carry it out with the same vigor that animates their play.

The nervous system is much like other complex machinery. Sometimes it gives results and again it does not work. With children the chief disturbances in the running of the nervous machinery are inhibitions and vagrant nervous currents. Inhibitions are the child's protest against the neglect of his deepest instincts. Boys require action, with freedom to initiate and discover; yet they are compelled to learn dreary facts which have no meaning for them. Often the work is wholly fruitless in the opinion of the teacher as well. One school with which the writer is familiar has given up formal grammar because it was found profitless,

and another, for the same reason, has abandoned geography. But it is a commentary on educational intelligence that a third class, turned loose in these subjects, asked so many questions and became so excited over their discoveries that the teacher had difficulty in keeping their pace. If there were no adventures here, the children, at all events, were not suppressed, and their instinct to investigate and display their knowledge was not curbed by the limitations of the course of study. Perhaps they were interested in verbs before mastering nouns, but in learning that something was done they soon discovered that some one had to do it. Geography literally drove the teacher to the swamps. And here the boys found real adventures. Hardly had school closed before they were off to the woods and streams. When they came back they were loaded with mud and information. Boys who had played truant could not be driven away from school. One who had been suspended for a serious offence begged, instead, for a whipping, so that he might not fall behind the other boys. The class session was the clearing-house for the information. Here, under the guidance of their teacher, they compared notes and learned the meaning of what they had discovered.

Evidently inhibitions and vagrant nervous impulses are not a necessary part of even the school-

boy. He *will* be active, he insists upon adventures, and he is bound to show off. Yet these are the very qualities which the school suppresses. The objection may be raised that the school was not organized to provide adventures. The reply to this is, first, that it is the duty of the schools to educate, and second, that teachers should make use of every means to improve their own energy-efficiency. Both of these statements are sufficiently commonplace to be acceptable. Our forefathers acted upon them when the teachers and pupils went into the woods for their occasional outing, to gather a fresh supply of birch switches. The schools have abandoned the rod as a promoter of educational efficiency, but they have put nothing, except sentimentality, in its place. Now, we have found racial instincts to be a tremendous force in the life of boys, driving them on in search of situations which shall satisfy the functional nervous craving for adventure. It is the law of the race, written in the blood and fibre of the youth.

I am not advocating turning study into play, nor roaming woods and fields in search of mere excitement. I do insist, however, that we have here a group of racial instincts available for the teacher who cares to increase his efficiency. If this view is correct, it is quite as unintelligent to ignore these instincts as for an efficiency engineer to overlook

losses that might be converted into useful energy. For these impulses are either with the educative process or against it. The problem is to direct them into new channels which make for mental and moral development, instead of allowing them to run the more natural, easier course of truancy, cheap shows, and dance-halls. The practical question in the problem is: Can these racial instincts be utilized in the educative process? Will the plan work? In answering these questions it is only necessary to show that it *has* worked with a sufficiently large number of pupils gathered from the usual varied surroundings of public-school children. If, in addition, we can show that the plan works under less favorable conditions than those which commonly characterize public schools, the argument is so much the stronger. It is not necessary to prove that *every* teacher can win to his support the native instincts of boys, any more than in demonstrating the efficiency of steam one must show that every man can manage an engine. In both cases the thing to do is to find some one who understands his job.

We have already noted several instances in which racial instincts were advantageously used for development. These cases were introduced to illustrate the amazing possibilities of primitive impulses as educative forces. The scout idea, it



may be objected, does not fit school conditions. For this reason, if the school is to avail itself of these instincts it remains to be shown that they may be used to promote self-control among pupils and improve the quality of work in the class. To this, then, we now turn.

## CHAPTER II

### THE WAYS OF YOUTH

It happened about two years ago in a country school. The building was perched on the top of a desolate hill, midway between two groups of farms which extended long distances in every direction except in that which led to the school. The little red house looked as though it had been dropped by a cyclone, so incongruous were the surroundings. Yet the patrons would have placed the building on another planet, to give each equal distances, could they but have bridged the chasm. Then they would never have visited it except to dismiss the teacher. But their jealousy was only human. It is self-satisfying to possess privileges even if we never derive advantage from them.

One teacher had been dismissed because she asked for an assistant that she might have more time to study in preparation for her classes. Being very practical people, these farmers wanted the best. They knew just what a good teacher should be, and, as usual, the desirable qualities included everything which the former teachers lacked. It is strange how all the bad qualities are combined

in those whom we know, and all the virtues united in one for whom we are always vainly searching. At all events, one who had not yet learned her lessons was not up to the standard of these practical people. It set a bad example to the children, they said. What is the use of going to school if one must be forever studying?

One teacher after another came—and suddenly left. The big boys managed that. Like their parents, they had their ideals and they had not yet found the one they wanted. Boys are rather particular in their preferences. The plan of dismissal was usually left to the biggest boy in the school. Joe was something of an artist in his way, and he prided himself upon his delicate touch. He always managed to be hard at work when the disturbance which he had arranged occurred. Then he appeared as the champion of the small boy whom he was using as a decoy. It was pleasant to be looked upon as the defender of the oppressed. The child was not to blame and the teacher punished him because he was little. That was the way in which Joe put it to his associates and parents.

A new teacher was to take charge in the morning and the boys were looking forward to the event. The change always relieved the monotony. Joe went early, because, like a good general, he wanted

to look the ground over. He entered the building with his hat on, by way of showing his familiarity with the place, and found himself face to face with a pleasant-looking girl who was putting the room in order.

"Good-morning," she said, smiling as she went on with her work.

Joe squirmed, standing first on one leg and then on the other, and finally took off his hat. The teacher looked hardly older than himself, and it was more than the defender of the oppressed could stand to see her working without offering assistance.

"Shan't I help you?" he asked.

"Yes, if you will, please. Then we can finish before the children come."

It was a great relief to have something to do with his hands. Curiosity also brought others early, and great was their amazement to meet Joe at the door putting the finishing touches to cleaning the black-board erasers.

"She's such a little thing," he said apologetically, "and besides, she's a girl."

Of course, every one wanted to help. Whatever Joe did was all right. So, in a moment they were all at work filling ink-wells and clearing out the papers which were wadded into the desks.

"There, I guess that will do for this morning,"

said the teacher. "Now, let's take our seats and get ready for work."

Joe sat down and took out his book. He was too much flustered to do anything else.

There was a mysterious silence during the day, broken only by the work of the recitations. Joe studied, or pretended to, because he was trying to recover himself. It contradicted his notion of fair play to annoy one with whom he had just been working on terms of equality. Besides, she had set him apart from the others when she said, "We can finish before the children come." At any rate, he would wait until to-morrow, he thought to himself, before starting the fun.

At the close of school the teacher asked Joe to stop a minute. As the others left, the lad approached the desk and stood with his hands dangling helplessly, wondering why he had consented to wait, and with half a mind to run out the door.

"Day after to-morrow is Saturday, Joe, and I want to take you all down to the creek to show you how geography is made."

"I didn't know it was made. I thought it was just writ," replied Joe.

"We will see when we get to the creek. But I must have some help. There are more children than I can take care of alone, and then, too, I shall need some one to help show the others all the

things that are to be seen, so I want you to help me."

This was a new situation for Joe, but he had never yet refused an appeal for aid. He had posed so long as the champion of those who needed assistance that he had come to think himself quite virtuous. Besides, it fitted into his feelings of superiority that he should be selected to assist in instructing the others. Of course, he consented. Any big boy would.

The anticipated events of the following day did not occur. Joe was trying to think the thing out. He knew the boys expected something to happen, but again his idea of a square deal interfered. He had been chosen to help teach the others on the excursion. He could not begin by making trouble.

"She don't just boss you around and tell you to get to work," he said apologetically at recess. "She treats a feller as though he had some sense."

Saturday afternoon the children returned from their tramp loaded with specimens for the next week's study. That evening when Joe sat down with a book which his teacher had lent him, he remarked to his wondering parents:

"Those boys don't know nothing. It's a big job to help teach 'em, and a feller's got to work."

This is putting the responsibility for discipline

and work upon the children, where it belongs. The teacher is left free to help and direct and inspire. And these are the duties for which disposition and training alike should equip, else one is unfitted to teach.

Under the ordinary method of teacher-control, a large part of the attention is divided. If nothing is happening, there is, at least, expectation that something interesting may occur, and so the attention wanders from one possibility of entertainment to another, returning frequently to the teacher to read the danger-signals in his look and attitude. It will not be gratifying to the strenuous pedagogues who pride themselves on their discipline to learn that in their school this divided attention is always in evidence. Martinets are good game for mischievous boys, and there is no closed season. The more watchful the teacher, the more exciting the sport.

A few days ago a young man, speaking of his employer, said: "He makes you feel that you are working with him instead of for him. You think that the business is yours as much as his." Some teachers possess this personality, and they create a feeling of self-government without machinery to help the illusion. Unfortunately, such teachers are rare because this quality of mind fits men for positions in which their talent has a wider scope. The

manner of producing the spirit of self-government is unimportant, however, provided only it is created in some way.

The complete reversal of the children's views about behavior is, perhaps, the most striking change observed in a school after the introduction of pupil-government. This change is especially noticeable in the case of boys who have been incorrigible in other schools.

"This boy is a menace to the school and community because of his total lack of moral sense," was the recommendation written by a New York principal for a boy who was being transferred to School 110, Manhattan. This school has pupil-government, and the new boy found to his amazement that he was no longer a hero when he behaved like a ruffian. Instead of having the other boys on his side against the teachers, he discovered that he had to answer for his offences to his own playmates. The situation was so odd that at first he did not know what to make of it. So he waited. He wanted to see how the land lay. And he found out. For, like most bad boys, he was bright, and one trial before his schoolmates was enough to convince him that his way of doing business was antiquated. As he was only twelve, he was not too old to get a few ideas and adapt himself to new conditions. One day the principal sent him out to



buy postage-stamps. When returning he saw three boys so far away from the building that he knew they were truants. He took them back to the school and delivered them to the principal. Later, in recognition of his observation and skill, his schoolmates elected him chief of police. His work with truants, in his new office, has made a record for his school.

- ✓ At another time a boy was dragged into the same school by two policemen. He had been sent by the court and, as he did not enjoy the prospect, he had tired out the two big men with his struggles. So they dropped him on the floor at the feet of the principal. After listening to the story, the principal gave the boy a card of permission to go where he wished, adding that if he preferred not to stay in the building he might leave. This struck the boy as a strange way of handling him. But since he was free to go, he thought he would like to stay a while. So, he wandered from one room to another and finally found a boy acquaintance making a desk. There was no teacher in the room and the visitor amused himself by picking up some of the tools and trying them on whatever happened to be convenient. One of the boys stepped up to him and said:

“You are injuring our property. You must leave those tools alone.”

"Who are you?" asked the intruder.

"I am one of the aldermen of the School City."

The new-comer looked with astonishment at the diminutive representative of the authority of the school. He was not accustomed to this treatment by a boy smaller than himself. The novelty of the situation puzzled him. But he laid aside the tools and sat down. At the close of school, he told the principal that things looked pretty good to him and he guessed he would come the next day. He soon became an active citizen of the School City. ✕

The instances of which we have been speaking are typical of the behavior of boys when in control of their work. Their laws may be unwritten, but woe to him who transgresses them! A youngster in School 23 of the Bronx was reported to the governor of his class for disorder. The governor convened the council and, after the evidence had been heard, the defendant was pronounced guilty. As the boy refused to acquiesce in the verdict, the governor laid the matter before the principal. The culprit was summoned to the office and told that he must make his peace with the governor and council before he could return to the class. It was not pleasant, but he did it. A short time after, he applied for admission to the "Boy Scouts" of his class. The application was laid on the

table by his classmates until sufficient time should have passed to enable them to determine whether he was worthy of the honor.

A boy of twelve in School 109, Brooklyn, disobeyed his teacher. He was tried in the court of the School City and found guilty. In this case the youthful judge, for reasons which he thought adequate, after a severe reprimand, released the boy on parole. This was the last occasion for summoning him before the court.

It is such situations as these that count for moral growth. These children are not taught morality. They grow into it. The lessons are more effective than if they came from the teacher because they represent the sentiment of the class. As an eighth-grade boy in School 23, of the Bronx, put it, "No boy likes to be thought different from other boys. No boy wants a whole class down on him."<sup>1</sup>

✕ The behavior of the pupils in these schools springs from the impulse of children to want the things that they control done well. They act rightly because under these conditions right action is identical with accomplishing what they have set themselves to do. The difference between such behavior and that of pupils managed according to orthodox pedagogy is illustrated by

<sup>1</sup> *The Spirit of the School*, January, 1911, p. 8.

a school which was recently brought to the attention of the writer. The teachers, five janitors, and fifty-four monitors were required to keep hardly more than twenty-two hundred children in order when they assembled for the afternoon session. If this is thought to be an extreme instance, the writer may mention that he has seen many schools dismissed, with teachers located at every turn on each floor. With such evident fear of their prowess, it is little wonder that children take delight in outwitting their guards. x

The needlessness of this pedagogical bluster is seen in the Thirteenth Avenue School, at Newark, New Jersey. Here twelve pupil monitors elected by the children have entire charge of the entrance and dismissal of nineteen hundred pupils. At the close of recess the writer stepped down to the playground and found monitors putting the children into line and marching them upstairs. Everything was done quietly and rapidly. There was no nonsense. Just before the hour of dismissal the monitors left their classes and took their respective places in the halls and on the stairs. The teachers remained in their rooms until the children passed out.

The ability of pupils to control themselves when they know that they are not watched from secluded corners and through glass doors is also seen

in School 114, Manhattan. Here the order of the boys as they march through the halls from room to room, which they do every forty minutes, needs no supervision except that of the officials of the School City. Here, also, the same young administrative officers direct the dismissal of the children. After school they take charge of those who remain in the building to play, a privilege which is granted because of the congested condition of the streets. Even in the street, on the way to school, the School City uses its authority to prevent disorder among its citizens.

At School 52, Manhattan, the writer had an opportunity to see how well the pupil officers could handle the children in case of fire. The principal signalled all the teachers to his office and then rang the fire-alarm. Instantly the class officer in each room took charge and in a moment the children were pouring down the stairs in orderly procession. There was no delay and no confusion. Yet, so far as the children knew, there was a real fire and imminent danger.

An illustration of the efficiency of children in the presence of actual danger has just come to the writer's attention. A fire occurred in one of the buildings of the Hebrew Sheltering Guardian Society, of New York City. When first discovered, smoke was already widely spread through

the part of the building in which the fire started. At the sound of the fire-gong, the officers of the two republics—one of the boys and the other of the girls—immediately took command of the children and marched them to the playrooms in another wing of the large building, where they remained in charge until the firemen extinguished the flames.

Truancy and tardiness have also been greatly reduced through the activity of the young administrative officers. In the grammar department of the Thirteenth Avenue School of Newark, New Jersey, which contains over seven hundred children, there have been only twenty cases of tardiness and no truancy during the past year. The principal of a New York school puts truants in charge of active citizens of the school republic who formerly were themselves truants. The boys know how to find runaways, and when once truants have been discovered, former delinquents are skilful in handling them. Besides, there is a sympathetic bond between the two that appeals to the truant. The feeling that authority and force are unfairly used, which arises so easily in police control of truancy, is absent.

Fair play is the pride of boys. They may boast of their thefts. Their playmates may call them liars without producing so much as a ripple of

anger. But accuse them of playing unfairly and there is trouble at once. Now, one of the advantages of pupil-government is that it furnishes a body of administrative officers to act in an emergency, and a court to permanently settle the difficulty. When no such organization exists, wrangling is interminable. No one has more authority than the others. Consequently, if the accused be one of the larger boys, he holds his own by his superior personality. Under pupil self-government, the boy charged with unfairness is at once sent from the game. That is the duty of the police commissioner of the city republic if he is present. If not, any officer of the government may act. Comparative size and strength do not matter. In only a few instances has a boy resisted the authority of the City. And he has never repeated the offence. Resistance does not pay, because the sentiment of the entire body of citizens supports the administration. A new-comer who has always ruled his playmates may test the sentiment, but he finds himself unsupported, and a boy will not long hold out alone. The refusal of his schoolmates to play with him is a convincing argument. When the case comes up for trial, the children may be equally divided on the question of guilt. But, again, once the case is settled by the court, there is unanimous support of the verdict.

We have seen that children are zealous in the enforcement of laws which they themselves have made. Boys will report their best friend for violation of their rules. In doing this they do not feel that they are tale-bearers. They have a common purpose which is vital to all. This is a serious matter with them, as any one may observe who has watched them at their own occupations. Opposition is treachery to the pupil-body. Therefore, it should be severely handled. So they are remorseless in reporting misdemeanors.

The punishments inflicted by the court vary in different schools. In some instances the convicted boy is sentenced to the service squad, or to extra sessions in the school-room, with additional work. In extreme cases he may be placed on probation or deprived of citizenship. If the children think the case too serious for the punishments within their jurisdiction, the culprit may be reported to the principal with or without recommendation regarding the penalty. In one such case the court requested a public reprimand, and the principal said that never in his experience was a reprimand so solemn or effective. The censure was not the principal's. It came from the fellow pupils of the boy. That was why it hurt.

The enthusiasm of the children in support of



their laws is seen also in their readiness to join in the enforcement even at the expense of the pleasures which are sometimes thought to be instinctive. The police commissioner for the past year in the Washington School at Allston, Massachusetts, was small for his age. A fight occurred on the playground between two of the larger boys with whom the commissioner was unable to cope physically. He at once called upon one of the larger boys for assistance. The fighters were separated and sent to the side lines. There was no evidence of the pleasure that boys usually find in watching a fight. They themselves had passed the law against fighting, and here was a clear violation which they would not permit. Later the offenders were brought before the court, found guilty, and punished.

There is little doubt of punishment meeting with approval, for children almost invariably support their officers. Those who resent having monitors appointed over them by their teachers, accept, without a murmur, monitors whom they elect as president, police commissioner, or, as in the case of the School Country, army officers. A boy in School 52, Manhattan, resisted the authority of one of the monitors and finally struck him. The rest of the children refused to allow him to take part in their games until he had accepted the

punishment of the court and promised not to repeat the offence.

These same officers, though not usually officious, are always ready to assume responsibility. A teacher once reported to the principal of the Thirteenth Avenue School in Newark, New Jersey, that two boys were fighting on the playground. The mayor of the School City happened to be in the office and the principal asked him to attend to the matter. The boy went at once, and as soon as the others caught sight of him the fight ended and the participants vanished. The teachers of this school are never stationed on the playground to preserve order, and the principal has been called down only once or twice during the year. This school, it is interesting to note in this connection, is the one to which incorrigible boys are usually sent.

Children cannot be described in terms of single acts. The same instincts may have varied forms of expression. Fighting, or delight in seeing others fight, is only one expression of the underlying instinct. Boys want to control, to rule, to display authority, to show off. Fighting is usually a means to the larger end. The skilful teacher recognizes this and turns the instinct into educative channels by giving opportunity to display authority in situations which develop social responsibility. And pupil-government offers just these situations.

There is, however, an even wider field in which pupil-government exerts an influence over its citizens. In several schools the boy officials voluntarily assume responsibility for the progress of backward children. If they are absent, these officials visit them in their homes. They see that their work is kept up and, when necessary, help them in their studies.

The office of commissioner of charities offers a further opportunity for the development of altruistic impulses. This office is by no means a sinecure, especially in the larger cities. Since all of the supplies are contributed by the children, the ethical value of the work is not limited to the commissioner. The young commissioner of School 147, Manhattan, in his June report thanks the citizens of the School City for their contributions. "They were distributed to needy children. Last month I gave out nine ties, one pair of trousers, and one pair of shoes." Neckties are more of a necessity to school life than might at first be thought. The School City requires neatness in its citizens. Boys must have their hair combed, their shoes must be polished, and they must be reasonably neat in other respects. If they are careless, the proper officer admonishes them. Disregard of the friendly warning brings them before the court. They soon find that it pays to be clean and neat.

The jurisdiction of the court has at times been a serious question. In several cases the decision has been handed down that the authority of the officials extends wherever citizens of the school are found. Naturally, this radical extension of authority of the School City exerts a soothing influence upon the work of evening gangs. It was this decision also which enabled the police commissioners to take up the problem of truancy. The cure of truancy means much more than fining parents or dragging a boy by the collar to the school. The citizens in several of the school cities have accomplished more than the truant officers appointed by the board of education.

The efficiency of these children in handling matters that have troubled older heads suggests a wide range of opportunities for social growth. The results obtained by some of the school officers are amazing. Miracles are common occurrences. The children in School 109, Brooklyn, could not keep the building clean because of the defective street pavement. They also found the noise of the traffic disturbing. Their senators and representatives instructed the school street commissioner to take up the matter with the city authorities. Finally, through the persistent efforts of the youthful commissioner, the streets in the vicinity of the school were repaved.

Again the local board for School 147, Manhattan, tried for five years to secure guards for the trees around the school building. Recently the park commissioner of the School City undertook to procure them. The guards were furnished and, in addition, eight new trees were supplied. This is training through doing. Its practice is not in high favor among pedagogues, but the theory is a charming subject for teachers' institutes. One is reminded of Bernard Shaw's epigram, "Those who can, do; those who cannot, teach."

In all of the schools in which pupil-government exists, the administrative officer for each room assumes control in the absence of the teacher. In School 23 of the Bronx, the governor takes charge. He uses the teacher's "plan-book," conducts the recitation and assigns the lesson for the following day.

The writer wandered through School 110, Manhattan, looking for disorder. By chance he stepped into a room in which a member of the class was explaining a problem on the blackboard. The room was quiet and the children were hard at work. When asked why he was in charge, the boy replied that he was the alderman from that room and the teacher had been called out.

A teacher from School 109, Brooklyn, was unexpectedly detained at home during the morning

session. When she succeeded in getting word to the principal, he found on going to the room, that the mayor of the School City had taken charge and was conducting the recitation.

This attitude toward the work is characteristic of all schools which have pupil-government, so far as the writer has been able to obtain information regarding them. The school consciousness has been replaced by a social consciousness. The children are working together to accomplish something. The work is theirs and the teacher is there to assist, not to drive. In his absence, everything goes on as usual, and, on his return, the children are loaded with questions and difficulties. There is no attempt to show off. The same serious activity prevails as when children are trying to build a boat on a Saturday afternoon.

Teachers are so vigorous in their denial that this attitude toward school-work can exist among children without the strong disciplinary hand of a pedagogue, that the writer, at the risk of repetition, will describe in some detail one of the schools referred to above. It is School 110, Manhattan.

The school has about 2,300 pupils, over 95 per cent of whom are foreigners. It is located in the most crowded section of Greater New York, and at the present time <sup>1</sup> contains, among others, 14

<sup>1</sup> Namely, at the time when the writer visited it in 1911.

part-time classes. About 150 of the boys were sent to the school from the courts or from other schools in which they were said to be incorrigible. Surely, such a school is about as hopeless for pupil-government as one could find. But let us see what the principal has to say about it.

"Pupil-government, which we have had for over nine years, has become so much a part of the school administration that we should feel considerably handicapped without it. We have been relieved of the supervision of the yards, halls, and stairs at all times.

"The authority of the pupil-government extends wherever the citizens of the school may be found, even into the homes.

"We have found that the example of the [school] citizens and the personal influence of the [pupil] officers have been more successful in reaching the incorrigible boys and those sent by the courts than anything else. We refer our cases of truancy to the mayor, who investigates and assigns the delinquents to certain of his officers. These boys take a personal interest in the pupils both in the school and in their homes. They invite them to join in their games, offer to help them in their studies, seek them out when they are absent, and try in all possible ways to help them to become eligible for citizenship in the School City."

This is the way pupil-government works out in a school apparently least adapted to the success of the plan.

Pupil-government is no longer an experiment. It has secured results which the school-master has failed to obtain by the traditional method; and it has gained these results in enough schools and under sufficiently unfavorable conditions to enable us, in case of failure, to know that the blame rests on the principal. It is a matter of understanding boys and being able to treat with them on terms of equality. But there is where the hitch comes. Equality in relation to the pupils is repugnant to school-masters. It collides with their feeling of superiority. Besides, pedagogical lore is against it. The idea is not covered with the mould of antiquity. The writer admits that working on terms of equality with one's pupils has not been the pedagogical fashion; but the few men who practised it were geniuses at teaching. This ought to give the plan respectability. It is natural that a change of style should be opposed. It involves discarding a good many antique ideas, to say nothing of men. The fashionable method, however, has not been productive of results. It has not proved itself efficient. Dissatisfaction with education in America was never keener than it is to-day. The cause of the



trouble, as usual, is the boy. He neither respects nor obeys. He is growing up without any regard for law or feeling of responsibility. This is the way one often hears the conditions stated.

X The other day a friend told the writer that the inhabitants of her town had been obliged to give up raising flowers. The school children jump the fences and pull up the flowers with the roots, racing over the grounds as suits their youthful pleasure. This is their method of securing "specimens" for the class-room. It is easier than going to the woods. This is in New England, where they are popularly supposed to do educational things a little better than on the "western frontier." Besides, the schools of this town are somewhat renowned for their efficiency even in New England. They have even been in the magazines. Therefore, they must be among the best from the standpoint at least of righteous pedagogues. So perhaps we shall not be thought indefensibly pessimistic if we venture the opinion that the discouraging statement regarding the lawlessness of American boys is not wholly without foundation. But if our justification for this admission is still questioned, it is only necessary to call attention to the touching wails heard at educational gatherings. The last of these lamentations was uttered at the recent meeting of the National Education Associa-

tion. "Disregard for law is fast becoming an American characteristic,"<sup>1</sup> is the way it was put. To remedy this unfortunate condition, the committee thinks that "certain elemental virtues must be inculcated in childhood and youth." Thirty-four virtues are enumerated. A course of instruction is offered which shall inoculate kindergarten children against the germs of inattention, disobedience, and selfishness, to be followed in the grammar school by suitable doses of patriotism, courage, and determination. The virtuous product is then to be preserved in altruism by a high-school course in the relations of the individual to society.

The conviction that "certain elemental virtues must be inculcated in childhood and youth," is older than man himself. The question for discussion is not the duty but the means. This is the problem, and the writer ventures the assertion that the method proposed by the Committee on Teaching Morals will not solve it. Children are immune to talks. Were they not, they would long since have perished from despair over the hopelessness of ever growing up to the state of perfection of the talkers.

To-day we are in the patent-medicine stage of education. We are always seeking pedagogical

<sup>1</sup> "Tentative Report of the Committee on a System of Teaching Morals in the Public Schools," p. 2.

elixirs for the cure of childhood's satanic exudations. When shall we learn that the commonplace maxim, "We learn by doing," is as valid in morality as in the manual-training department? Children grow into the social virtues by practising them. And no teacher is so efficient in this training as the playmates of the boys. The difference is that under the method of precept and instruction, the children look upon rules of conduct as part of the teacher's stock in trade. They are rules which adults put upon them. Of course children do not reason it out. They do not analyze either the rules or the situations. They simply look upon the requirements as useless obstacles to their pleasure at the moment. Under self-government, however, all this changes. A New York principal who has a successful pupil organization thinks one of its advantages is just this, that it makes children analytic. The writer himself heard an animated and intelligent discussion, in a legislative assembly of the school to which reference has just been made, of the question whether pupils should be allowed to speak in class without permission of the teacher. The problem which these youngsters were trying to solve was, What conditions are most favorable to the progress of class-work? Did they themselves—the pupils—receive more from the recitation

when each one could ask questions and express his opinion without restraint? There was no school consciousness here. It was social consciousness—the attitude of co-operation for a definite end. They had something to do with which they were all vitally concerned. How could they best do it? Having decided that problem, they firmly hold one another to the agreement. This is teaching self-control, and training in obedience to law. ✕

School efficiency reduces itself finally to the mental attitude of the pupils. Subjects of study may be rearranged. The hours may be shortened or lengthened. Promotion may be rapid or slow. It will all be useless unless at the same time the children are freed from the notion that the school-work and discipline are put upon them by an extraneous and superior force. Introduce any improvement you please and the educational efficiency will still be determined by the mental attitude of the pupils toward their work. The excuse for printing this platitude is that schoolmen have not grasped it. They are continually trying to interest children through new machinery, such as attractive studies or by oiling the old engine with sentimentality. But boys ridicule sentimentality, and if the new studies attract them for the moment, the problem remains unsolved. For mental growth requires that children

enter vigorously into the accomplishment of whatever work is given them.

Too much attention is being given to wheedling children into learning. This statement will meet with approval because it coincides with man's desire to display authority. Besides, there is at present a strong reaction against the cajolery practised by the schools. The conclusion, however, that relief is to be found in severe discipline from the principal's office is a mistake. Martinets are no more fitted for the school-room than sentimentalists. A threatening hand will make a boy cringe while it is raised, but he slyly awaits his chance when the back is turned. Martinets make cowards and sneaks, but not men. They do not train for self-control. Neither do they produce an attitude of mind which gives educational efficiency. Severe discipline from the teacher's desk accentuates the school consciousness in the pupils, and it is just this state of mind that fosters opposition and resentment. Everything which the children do under these conditions is done through compulsion or fear. Educational efficiency requires co-operation between teachers and pupils, and co-operation means the elimination of the school consciousness and the substitution for it of the social consciousness. A few men have the power to create at once an intimate alliance with

children. When they do this, they produce a situation similar to that which exists under pupil government. They accomplish the same result without the aid of the machinery of organization. But such teachers are lamentably few. The writer usually finds the most rascally little deceivers in the schools of principals who boast loudest of the seraphic virtues of their charges. The proper order has been reversed. These children have learned how to manage the principal.

Pupil-government creates a desire for order, discipline, and study, because the children feel that they are in charge. Authority always produces an attitude of responsibility. The pupils regard rules of conduct as vital to themselves because the problems of the school are now their own. Infractions of the regulations interfere with the performance of their work. So they are severe in their judgments. They tend to view everything from a personal and social point of view. "But only the man who has had experience in both methods, the old institution-method of discipline and the plan of a limited self-government, can realize the enormous difference in the spirit of discipline, the powerful effect upon the character and individualities of the children and upon the morals in general. . . . Instead of training the child to blind submission and blind obedience, it

helps him to evolve, to clarify, to rationalize into moral precepts and judgments what would otherwise appear to him oppressive and repulsive laws."<sup>1</sup>

The writer has seen all of the virtues for which the Committee on Teaching Morals has prepared its mixture, taught on the playground, in the school, and at the courts of the schools which have pupil-government. The health commissioner attends to tidiness, and every citizen sees to it that the necessity of obedience, self-sacrifice, patriotism, courage, determination, and the relations of individuals to society are impressed upon those who need them. To be called to account by one of their own companions is a serious matter. It lacks the entertaining features of a similar arraignment by their teacher. They are no longer martyrs and heroes. They are outcasts from their playmates until they make good. The chief trouble in pupil-government is not laxity in enforcement of law. The boys are inclined to be too severe. The offenders submit gracefully, however, because it is the decision of their associates. To "take their medicine" without wincing is a part of the ethics of boys—that is, if the medicine is prescribed by their comrades.

Under the system of teacher control, boys look

<sup>1</sup> "Some Modern Tendencies in Jewish Orphan Asylum Work," by Ludwig B. Bernstein, pp. 18-19.

upon order as an evil to be endured only when the uselessness of resistance to a superior force has been demonstrated. This does not mean that a fight always precedes the acceptance of overlordship. It is usually assumed that the teacher can maintain his authority if the issue be forced, but the children test him in various ways to learn how far they may go. If conditions seem favorable, they push on further. They feel their way with more or less caution, at first, but grow bolder as they find their advance and the accompanying pleasures undisturbed. With a new teacher these actions are much like those of pioneers exploring a strange land. They are in an enemy's country and must move cautiously, retreating when the opposing force is too strong for successful opposition. Children have not yet learned to prize order as a means of providing the quiet necessary for study. Why should they appreciate the value of discipline before they understand the determination and persistence which must precede and accompany success in life? The educational utility of pupil-government grows out of this lack of experience. Self-government turns school sentiment into a forceful motive for discipline without requiring the pupils to appreciate the future value of the training. They are acquiring ideas of social rights and duties, and habits of study; and they



are securing them under conditions essentially the same as those in the outside world. This is a clear improvement on the traditional school which introduces unreal conditions found nowhere else in life.

But there is another reason for children's resistance to external authority. Man wants to have his opinions asked. It was not oppression that caused our forefathers to revolt against England. They only wanted to be consulted about taxes and a few other matters. Had the king's advisers understood men well enough to consult with the colonists about ways and means of raising money, they would probably have drunk George's health in well-brewed tea instead of diluting it in the water of Boston harbor.

It must be admitted that, until quite recently, in the United States at least, this regard for one's opinions was easily satisfied. It was sufficient for all requirements that the government be called democratic and representative. Political business could then be transacted by packed caucuses and conventions without interference from those who were deceived into believing that they were represented. The delusion was aided by sending men around to invite the people to political meetings to hear the questions of the day discussed. The inference which men drew was that their opinions and votes were thought valuable.

This credulity, awakened by appeals to man's self-esteem and love of glory, is a rudimentary trait in the civilized adult. It is strikingly conspicuous in savages and normally characteristic of children, since they live the psychical life of our primitive ancestors. Its general and obtrusive presence in adults is evidence that man is only relatively civilized. Scratch his skin and you draw the blood of the savage. Tickle him gently and the simplicity of early man responds to your touch.

To-day, however, the insistent demand, among other things, for direct primaries and the recall, indicates the approach of a new stage in man's evolution. He is growing restless under sham democracy and misrepresentation.

Children, in spite of their credulity in many matters, are excessively jealous of their prerogative to manage their own affairs. They are quick to see through pretence and affected compliance with their wishes. Their zeal for their institutions may date back to the tribal relations of primitive man when each member of the group was conscious of his importance in the deliberative councils of his nation. At any rate, the upper grammar and high school age is the period in which children are devoted to governmental functions.

The desire to be consulted in the management of their business rarely takes the form of specific

demands. To be sure, boys occasionally have their revolts or their "strikes," but these are only sporadic occurrences. The rarity of these events is probably due to the children's realization of their own weakness. They know that an outbreak will be sternly suppressed. Consequently, they adopt the subtler method of secret resistance and deception. Stern repression is the best culture for deceit. Pupil-government, on the other hand, cultivates frankness. The motive for deception is removed, since the enactment and enforcement of rules are in their hands. They do not deceive one another because, among their fellows, the impulse prevails to admit the offence, to stand their ground and defend themselves. Moreover, boys are clever in detecting falsehood. They know the game. Besides, they are not repressed by social, or, if you please, educational restraints. They do not hesitate to accuse of falsehood. In this way, by their own "third degree" they often force a confession which an adult would only inhibit. To be accused of falsehood by playmates does not have the disastrous effect which would follow if the charge were made by the teacher. Indeed, when the accusation is made and proved by playmates the result is decidedly educative. Pupil-government thus becomes a highly moral instrument for the schools.

There are several reasons why self-government appeals so strongly to children. They want to organize and direct something. If they are not allowed responsible participation in school matters they do not regard the business as theirs. It is the teacher's and he must handle it as best he can without their assistance. Meanwhile, since they are determined to manage something, they arrange other events without regard to conflict of dates. That is the trouble. The school business and boys' events are scheduled for the same hour and place, *i. e.*, the school-room. Or, if the success of an event requires a different date, other business, such as the teacher's, is laid aside and the principal finds the conflict of interests on the walls of the building when he arrives in the morning. And all because the teachers are unwilling to take the boys into co-operative partnership and give them a hand in managing the school business.

Pupil-government appeals to the instinct for concerted action. After boys have passed beyond the individualism of early childhood, they unite for work and play. When they do not choose sides, they fall naturally into pretty well-defined groups. Of course each group has its leader. He does much of their thinking for them, suggests their exploits, and preserves peace and order according to boy standards. Usually the leader

amalgamates divergent interests by his overpowering personality. No one type of act is characteristic of their organizations. The boys usually engage in adventures or crimes because they are left to themselves. Under guidance they are as capable of heroic self-sacrifice as of crime. The question is wholly one of leadership, and here the skilful teacher plays his part. But he must not direct in the domineering, school-masterish fashion. That at once puts the boys in opposition. The teachers in one of the school republics quietly advocated the candidacy of a favorite boy for mayor. As might have been expected, an opposition candidate of "the people" arose and carried the election by an overwhelming majority. Curiously enough, too, from the standpoint of the teachers' fears, the republic did not go to pieces. The new mayor rose to the occasion. The children in this school taught their teachers a lesson in government. They were more open in dealing with their superiors than the latter had been in the methods which they followed. Besides learning that candor is the best policy in school, the teachers discovered that children are often better judges of the capacity of one another than are those who are over them.

Boys can always be handled if the touch be delicate. But ideas must be suggested rather than

commanded. Successful training consists in implanting thoughts so gently that they seem to spring up in the mind of the pupil. Then he is proud of them and acts upon them, because they are his own.

Authority, even in trivial matters, brings consciousness of responsibility, and so the leader frequently asks for advice. The teacher, however, should never force an action in matters which he has turned over to his pupils. It were better that the boys make mistakes. They are quick to see an error, and invariably profit from it. You may rest assured that children want things which they control to be successful. Their earnestness for order and work under pupil-government is amazing to those who have always thought that teachers are the only ones who can manage a school.

Taking the children into partnership does not give the teachers less to do, but it adds to their work the interest which attends co-operative planning. Instead of continually watching for disorder the teacher now has freedom to think. If disturbance occurs in the absence of the teacher, the proper official of the School City at once asserts his authority. Boys have a very effective way of suppressing resistance to the mandates of their government.

Self-government is not a plaything for the en-

tainment of pupils and teacher during leisure moments. It must be serious business if it is to amount to anything. The writer has found schools in which little could be said to its credit. But in all such cases a day in the school revealed the fact that the cause of the trouble was the fault of the teachers and not the pupils. Any number of failures in a given method does not condemn the plan. Failure needs no ability. Any one can fail. Success, however, is a different proposition. Here lies the test of power. One success under typical conditions establishes the right of the method to a hearing. And pupil-government has succeeded in localities where, according to the popular judgment regarding children, it should have failed.

The plan which we are advocating involves a complete change in the attitude of teachers toward their pupils. The schools, as usually conducted, break down completely in training for self-control. The reason for this is that pupils are under constant espionage from those over them. If monitors are appointed they are looked upon as the teachers' agents. The children are "good" so long as they are watched. Why should they seek to control themselves when every movement is directed from the teacher's desk? The only opportunity for individual initiative is toward disorder. No wonder they seek this outlet. Self-

control is a delicate growth. It requires a stimulating environment. Even instincts which have their roots far back in the early life of the species are dependent upon environment for their emergence. Much more must this dependence upon surroundings prevail for states of consciousness so new in the race as those that lead to self-control. And it is in the absence of conditions which promote this attitude of mind that the schools fail most conspicuously.

One of the functions of the school is popularly thought to be training for life. Yet the only way in which they do this is by giving the pupils a little knowledge. Mentally and ethically the children are kept in a state of bondage. They are told what they may do and what they may not do. Even their knowledge is measured out to them in doses assimilable by the mythical "average child," without any reference to individual needs. Then, at the end of it all, they are sent out into the world, the large majority of them to make their own way with little personal guidance. What has the school done for them in the matter of self-direction in work or self-control in conduct?

The remark is often heard that children learn more from one another than from their teachers. This is doubtless true as far as self-control is concerned. Children regard the opinions of their



playmates as valid judgments. Those of adults are beliefs of a strange people. Boys think of themselves as apart from whoever may be placed over them. The desires and pleasures are not the same and hence arises an antagonism of interests. With their associates, however, the matter is different. Here is harmony of desires. On the playground, therefore, the boy learns to think of himself as a responsible person in relation to other persons. In the school-room his responsibility is divided. He still maintains the same loyalty toward his playmates, but the teacher is in a different class. The boy of grammar-school age is just emerging from the individualistic stage, and responsibility is pretty closely restricted to his "set." At all events, his duty toward its members is greatly exaggerated. So he will not report another for misdemeanor.

Now, one of the ethical duties of the school is to train children to a larger view of social responsibility—to help them outgrow the stage of group individualism. Further, if good behavior means anything more than obedience through fear, and if the elemental virtues of the Committee on Teaching Morals are to have any other than a selfish basis, the individual and group interests, of which we have been speaking, must be identified with the interests of society as a whole. And this

is exactly the service that pupil-government performs. The interests of pupils and teacher are merged in one. The children regard the one as theirs. Good! That is just the condition for accomplishing most. The pupils now report misdemeanors to their own officers or to the teacher. They are not tale-bearers, because there is only one social group. They are united against all who disturb the common interests.

But the extension of social responsibility does not end here. The ruling of the school courts, that the authority of the officers of the School City reaches wherever the citizens of the school are found, enlarges also the duties of the citizens. Wherever authority goes, there also is responsibility. So the young citizens take an interest in the less fortunate members of their school. They visit them when they are sick. They ascertain the reason for absence, plan for the reformation of truants, and contribute from their mite to those in need.

Through the park and health commissioners, their interest goes even further. During the recent threatened water famine in New York, the officers of School 147, Manhattan, gave directions in the paper of the School City for the conservation of water in the homes. The concluding statement was, "If you notice anybody wasting water, ex-

plain the danger of such action. If your suggestions are not heeded, notify the health commissioner of the School City." This is only one of the many public duties which have been assumed. There have been campaigns against dirt as well as against danger to life through the obstruction of fire-escapes. The extent to which the social spirit may be engendered through pupil-government is limited only by the ability of the teacher to deal with boys.

We found, in the preceding chapter, that the racial instincts of children call for action. When left to themselves these impulses lead to atavistic adventures. The boy tends to revert to the primitive type of savage man. But action has a wide range and boys do not require merely one sort. Training in behavior consists largely in discovering activities that have social worth and which still satisfy the racial claim. The enthusiasm for adventures then extends to the ethical ideas that are worked into these activities. The ideas receive their juvenile value by being an integral part of the adventure. So we have learned that truthfulness and sympathy and trustworthiness are eagerly sought by Boy Scouts because these virtues are a part of the character of a scout. But this is only one example of a type of acts. The writer found youngsters just as proud of being "citi-

zens" as of being scouts. Managing the organization of a school republic, in its turn, makes a strong racial appeal. And here, as before, the enthusiasm is carried over to associated ideas and purposes. So the social responsibility of the School City, as exemplified in the school court and on the playground, spreads to the school-work. The boys behave and study because order and industry are characteristic of good citizens. In this way the entire school programme shares the advantages of the new spirit.

To think events in their right proportion requires as much effort and practice as to learn to rightly judge perspective, or to "see" the earth round instead of flat. The tendency in children is always to exaggerate the factors that to them are impressive and to miss the significance of other less imposing elements. The effect of this is seen in discipline and in studies. The school consciousness pervades both. The pupils study when some one in authority is present. Impending penalties constrain them to act in a "reasonable" manner. But this is only forced reasonableness. It does not train the children to see things in their right proportion. They study because they are compelled to do so for recitation effect, not to master the subject. Thoughtful teachers freely admit this, but they insist that they are helpless feeders of the

school machine. "It takes too long to teach children to think," said a teacher a short time ago. "The machinery is always grinding. So we must fill the bags as fast as possible."

Pupil-government trains children to image situations in their right proportions. In other words, it teaches them to think in social and ethical terms. It also puts them into the right state of mind for accomplishing things and keeps their racial instincts busy in productive ways. That is a good deal. In addition, it changes the attitude of the teachers toward the pupils. And that is almost unprecedented.

## CHAPTER III

### THE CHANCE TO GROW

WHEN Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes was once asked at what age the education of a child should begin, he is reported to have replied, "Three hundred years before the child is born." Unfortunately, it has never been possible to make this pedagogical arrangement with our ancestors. The immediate problem of society, therefore, remains to take children as they are and make them into the best possible citizens.

If we may draw inferences from the life histories of the lower animals regarding the development of children, adaptation to surrounding conditions, with its accompanying mental and bodily changes, is one of the most significant of the educational forces.

Among wild ducks, intelligence is the test of survival, and so these animals develop a large brain, and are clever in devices for outwitting their enemies; but the brains of their domesticated relatives are smaller, since with them stupidity is not disadvantageous, providing they grow a large body.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> De Varigny's "Experimental Evolution," p. 166; Lloyd Morgan's "Animal Life and Intelligence," p. 171; Headley's "Problems of Evolution," p. 99.

Resistance to poisons may be developed in animals by acclimatization. Sometimes this resistance assumes almost incredible strength. Mice fed on food cakes soaked in a vegetable poison, ricin, may develop a power of resistance, by a gradual increase in the quantity of the poison, that enables them to thrive on from two hundred to eight hundred times the maximum amount that could at first be withstood.<sup>1</sup>

To determine the durability of this new adaptation, these mice were fed with ordinary food for over six months and a repetition of the test proved that they could still successfully resist more than fifty times the quantity which they could at first withstand.

"DeQuincey at one time was in the habit of taking eight thousand drops of laudanum daily, this enormous quantity probably producing no greater effect than a dose of thirty to fifty drops on an ordinary man."<sup>2</sup>

The extent of possible adaptive changes is hardly yet grasped. Experiment has shown that the adaptability of organisms is enormous. By slow degrees Dallinger<sup>3</sup> was able to accustom *Flagellata* to life at 70° C. though they ordinarily succumb to temperature a little below 16° C. Daven-

<sup>1</sup> I. P. Ehrlich, *Deutsche Medicinische Wochenschrift*, vol. 70, 1891, p. 976.

<sup>2</sup> H. M. Vernon's "Variation in Animals and Plants," p. 388.

<sup>3</sup> See Davenport's "Experimental Morphology," part I, p. 253.

port and Castle also experimented on tadpoles, and found that they could develop in them an increased resistance to heat that was clearly due to a change in the protoplasm of the individuals.<sup>1</sup> This capacity for adaptation to a temperature that normally is fatal shows a remarkable latent power of variation in animals.

Schmankewitsch has shown, among other things, that the crustacean *Artemia salina*, "living in salt water, can change itself, by slowly becoming accustomed to a higher or lower percentage of salt, into a different form of crustacean—in water of greater concentration into *Artemia milhausenii*, and in fresh water into *Branchipus stagnalis*, two forms having wholly different characteristics."<sup>2</sup> DeVarigny,<sup>3</sup> referring to the investigations of Schmankewitsch and others, has expressed the opinion that change in environment may produce changes in the structure and physiology of animals. As a result of these bodily changes, animals may gradually become accustomed to conditions, and thrive in them, though death would have resulted had the change been sudden. Indeed, the organic adaptation may be so complete as to unfit them for survival in their original habitat. Tadpoles four or five weeks old, which had grown ac-

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 253-254.

<sup>2</sup> Max Verworn's "General Physiology," Lee's translation, p. 183.

<sup>3</sup> "Experimental Evolution," pp. 213-219.



customed to water containing fourteen grammes of salt per litre, died rapidly when restored to their normal element, fresh water.<sup>1</sup>

The recent investigation of the changes in bodily form of descendants of immigrants is interesting in this connection. Professor Boas found that "the head form, which has always been considered as one of the most stable and permanent characteristics of human races, undergoes far-reaching changes due to the transfer of the races of Europe to American soil."<sup>2</sup> The ease with which Dr. F. A. Woods disposes of this contribution to the vexed question of the comparative influence of heredity and environment, by saying that "the real deduction from all this work (of Boas), if indeed it should be confirmed, is that it is easier to modify a bone than it is a brain,"<sup>3</sup> suggests the story of the insane man who believed that he was dead. The attending physician, wishing to free him of this fixed idea, asked whether dead men bleed.

"No," replied the patient.

The physician then inserted a sharp instrument into the man's arm. When the blood was flowing freely, he said, "See, you are bleeding. Therefore you are not dead."

<sup>1</sup> DeVarigny, *op. cit.*, pp. 187, 190.

<sup>2</sup> "Senate Document No. 208, Sixty-first Congress, 2d Session," p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> *Popular Science Monthly*, April, 1910.

"But that only proves that dead men can bleed," replied the insane patient.

Besides these progressive alterations in animals, arrest of development may also occur through the influence of the environment. The gill-bearing period of many amphibians may be greatly, and in some cases apparently indefinitely, prolonged by controlling certain environmental conditions.<sup>1</sup> "If tadpoles be prevented artificially from creeping upon dry land, they retain their tails and gills, and the lungs do not develop even though the animals reach a considerable size."<sup>2</sup> "Indeed," says DeVarigny, "living organisms are in so many ways, and by so many parts, dependent upon the external medium, their adaptation to it is so very close, and the slightest change in environment is apt to react on such a large proportion of the vital functions, that we cannot wonder at the enormous influence which external modifications can exert on life."<sup>3</sup> Such is the irresistible control in which the environment holds the lower animals. Let us now examine the situation in its relation to children.

When we consider the question of mortality, the death rate of children has materially decreased. Since this control over the environment seems

<sup>1</sup> DeVarigny's "Experimental Evolution," pp. 111-112.

<sup>2</sup> Max Verworn's "General Physiology," Lee's translation, p. 182.

<sup>3</sup> DeVarigny's "Experimental Evolution," p. 181.

evident and is easily tabulated, it has been extensively quoted as proof that, so far at least as man is concerned, environmental influences are no longer dominant. The science of longevity, however, whether it deals with children or adults, is only the systematic application of adaptations which have hitherto escaped our notice. Medicine made little progress against tuberculosis before the discovery of the open-air treatment. Preventive medicine is based on conformity to nature's laws. The environment is utilized, not ignored. The part that intelligence plays is in the selection of an environment suited to produce the desired change, and in subjecting the patient to these conditions so as to facilitate the adaptation. In its larger aspects, however, the question is much more involved. If children are preserved with organs so defective as to seriously handicap them in the struggle for success, this disadvantage introduces a serious social problem, since it increases the obstacles in the way of activities which make for character, and that, too, at an age when the inclination at best is toward the freer, wilder life. Examples of this are seen in the results of the physical examination of school children.

From eighty-eight to ninety-eight per cent of the New York City school children examined by

physicians from the Health Department were in urgent need of medical treatment.<sup>1</sup>

In the New York City public schools 252,254 children were examined by physicians of the Health Department during the year closing in July, 1910. Among these children, which constitute only about one-third of those in the school, 264,625 defects were found, of which only 113,278 were remedied.<sup>2</sup>

An investigation of the children of the Boston public schools by the Division of Child Hygiene of the Health Department is in progress at the present time. As this book goes to press, 42,750 have been examined. Of these, 14,957 were pronounced "normal" and 27,793 were found defective.<sup>3</sup>

The investigation of the physical condition of the children in the Saint Louis public schools is not yet completed. Up to the present time 21,334 have been examined and of these, fifty-seven per cent are defective. This is ten per cent less than were found defective last year. The indication is that the advice given by the inspectors at the previous examinations has been acted upon in some instances and the defects remedied.

<sup>1</sup> "Co-operative Studies and Experiments by the Department of Health and Bureau of Municipal Research, 1908," p. 20.

<sup>2</sup> "Twelfth Annual Report of the New York City Superintendent of Public Schools," p. 137.

<sup>3</sup> Preliminary report to the author from the Chief of the Division of Child Hygiene.

The effect of physical defects upon retardation in school has been investigated by Mr. Leonard Ayres for the Russell Sage Foundation. The study shows, among other things, "that when children who are badly retarded are compared with normal children and very bright children in the same age group, so that the diminishing of defects through advancing age does not enter as a factor, the children rated as 'dull' are found to have higher percentages of each sort of defect than the normal and bright children."<sup>1</sup>

The exception to this generalization is defective vision. The report of the medical inspectors of New York City, upon which Dr. Ayres based his study, limited their investigation of eye defects to acuity of vision. It is therefore not surprising to find no connection between defective vision and retardation, since teachers have learned, during the last few years, to give attention to myopic children. Hypermetropia, astigmatism, and muscular maladjustment, however, which were not considered by the medical inspectors, nor by Dr. Ayres, are the cause of nerve-irritating eye-strain. The insidious effect of these ocular abnormalities, since the sufferers can see as well as the best, makes them all the more disastrous for

<sup>1</sup> "The Effects of Physical Defects on School Progress," *Psychological Clinic*, vol. 3, p. 76.

the mental and moral progress of children.<sup>1</sup> The strain, always present, is intensified by application to books, and so the boys are driven by an unrecognizable and uncontrollable impulse from school to the street. Dr. G. M. Case, whose professional work as eye surgeon in the Elmira Reformatory qualifies him as an expert witness, says: "There is no room for doubting the fact that truancy in school children, in a large percentage of cases, can be traced to this cause, which" (when allowed to continue) "precipitates the individual into the life of a vagabond and criminal."<sup>2</sup>

Out of four hundred inmates of the Elmira Reformatory upon whom Dr. Case has reported, thirty-three and one-half per cent had ocular error sufficient to require glasses. And the physician is of the opinion that this proportion is a fair statement of the situation as regards nearly four thousand other inmates whom he examined. When it is understood that twenty-five men were tested in an evening, the certainty that obscure defects, those which produce nervous strain, escaped detection becomes evident. The effect of this continued nervous irritation in driving even studious boys from books to excitement, for relief from the nagging strain, is well shown by Dr.

<sup>1</sup> See "Mind in the Making," by Edgar James Swift, ch. IV.

<sup>2</sup> Reprint from the *Ophthalmic Record*, November, 1906, p. 7.

J. H. Claiborne's description of his own school days:

"I now know I have always carried about 1.50 diopters of hypermetropia; in my very early days, possibly more. Books and school were to me a nightmare, a source of unutterable disgust. I drove myself to my tasks with the scourge of duty; I never took one moment's joy or pleasure in the acquisition of knowledge, unless it was the satisfaction of a task accomplished or conquest gained. I have no memory of a sense of pleasure connected with my studies at school or college. The only pleasant memories I have of these periods of my life are those connected with outdoor sports, or facts gained through observation, or in the lecture-room through my ears; and from my boyhood I could never understand why we were forced to read from books all that we learned.

"Early in life I pondered over the easiness of the task of those who never sat at the feet but who followed the tracks of the peripatetic philosophers. Verily, my school and college days would have been a joy to me had my ears and my distant vision been my means of acquiring knowledge. And yet I never had a headache in my life at school nor in after years until the commencement of presbyopia. I was nervous to the point of madness at times, and the more nervous I was the

more diligent I became, and the nearer I put my nose to my book. I have frequently observed that my right eye was crossed after prolonged study, or after a long, written examination; this was also at times observed in my case by a fellow-student. That the difficulty lay in my hypermetropia I have no manner of doubt. I had inherited a love of learning, I felt sure, and I had a right to the assurance, and my hatred of close application was a mystery to me. I created a frown by my accommodative strain, which has ever been a part of me. Prolonged application to books would be followed often by sleeplessness or violence in the field at play. I learned for these reasons the art of complete concentration, but at what an expense of nervous energy!"<sup>1</sup>

A special committee appointed by the Chicago Board of Education to secure information concerning under-fed children found that "five thousand children who attend the schools of Chicago are habitually hungry. They often go to school breakfastless, and at times go to bed hungry. As a result of being under-fed and living in unsanitary homes, they have become victims of malnutrition—which creates subnormal children. The lack of a square deal and a square meal at home often

<sup>1</sup> Reprint from the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, December 10, 1904, pp. 15-16.



presents the pathetic sequel of the child who is backward at study and forward in delinquency.”<sup>1</sup> From the canvass made by truant officers, social settlements, and charity organizations the committee estimates that fifteen thousand school children do not receive three square meals a day. Observation of the children in a few schools in which they were fed showed improvement in attendance and study. “It has checked demotion and increased promotion in the grades. . . . Several of those who were backward and required two years to do the work of one grade were promoted in eight months, and most of them required the usual one year’s time to complete the work of a grade.”<sup>2</sup>

In the Chicago Parental School, where painstaking examinations of the mental and physical condition of the inmates have been made, the nervous system of the boys when committed exhibits less precision in hand movements, is slower to react, and is not so well equipped with sense impressions in comparison with the average public-school boy.<sup>3</sup> That this is due to the food which they have eaten and to the life led, together with lack of medical supervision, is shown by the fact that at the time of parole “the physical and nervous

<sup>1</sup> “Report on Under-fed Children.” Reprinted from the minutes of the Chicago Board of Education, 1908, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 5, 11.

<sup>3</sup> “Report of the Chicago Parental School, 1907,” p. 16.

condition of the boys has so improved that they are, in the majority of cases, equal to, and, in many cases, superior to, the public-school boys in physical condition.”<sup>1</sup>

The effect of the environment upon the individual is our present theme. The physical defects and hunger response which we have been considering are features of the environment because they are caused by parental and social ignorance, and also for the reason that environment, in a large sense, includes all the uninherited forces playing upon the child. Physical defects have been found to exert a powerful and treacherous influence on actions.

Adaptation is forced upon the lower animals by the demands of survival. Notwithstanding the occasional mutual aid to which Kropotkin<sup>2</sup> has called attention, the destruction of the inefficient is nature's law. Man has ameliorated its severity among his fellows, but in so doing he has merely modified it so far as survival is concerned. The lives of the physically and mentally weak are prolonged, but the struggle is only postponed till maturity. In cases where great wealth permits the continued survival of the inefficient, they continue socially unfit, and the struggle becomes more severe for others in proportion to the wealth de-

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> “Mutual Aid Among Animals.”

voted to the maintenance and luxury of these incapables.

Because of the tremendous influence of emotions, adaptation is certainly no less forceful in human society than among the lower animals. The clubman must keep the pace of his companions or drop out of their class. The extent to which homes are being mortgaged for the purchase of automobiles is coming to be regarded as a national menace. In one city of hardly more than one hundred and ten thousand inhabitants, it is a matter of record that two thousand four hundred men mortgaged their homes for this purpose. The conclusion is inevitable that in most of these cases the determining force was the desire of families to preserve their adaptation to the group with which they had been associated. The same principle of adaptation was illustrated in the actions of the citizens of Cairo, Illinois, after the acquittal of the men charged with being members of the mob which attacked the jail in an effort to lynch the negro Pratt.<sup>1</sup> The parade and celebration with fireworks were in no sense an expression of belief in the innocence of the acquitted men, but were rather manifestations of joy over the fact that no one had been discovered and convicted. One cannot escape the conviction that many of the citizens who engaged

<sup>1</sup> See *Saint Louis Republic*, July 23, 1910.

in that celebration would have been quite respectable men had they lived in a community where their associates believed in law and order instead of in riots and lynching.

Street boys have their code of conduct, and the urchin who fails to live up to it might better drop out of life than continue to live among his companions. Ridicule is the only treatment he will receive, and this is the one thing which boys cannot endure.

Standing for the right, regardless of what one's associates may say or do, is the ethical attitude, but to expect a boy to do so against the resistance of his whole environment, at an age when ideals of conduct have not yet been settled into fixed principles of action, and when the censure and ridicule of associates are so keenly felt as to lead at times to suicide, is asking too much. When children succeed in taking this stand it is because of strong inherited traits, or on account of the inspiration of family or friend. In the former case it is an individual characteristic, and in the latter it is only a stronger element in the environment overcoming the weaker. The first is exceptional and the second quite as truly an illustration of adaptation as it would be if the boy yielded to the code of his playmates.

Among animals low in the scale, adaptations

are decided almost wholly by instinct. Bees feed so unvaryingly upon certain species of flowers that the flavor of their honey may be predicted in advance. Higher up some plasticity is observed, and with it a greater capacity to assume new adaptations, though the rigidity of instinct is still dominant. Deer wander widely in the late summer seeking food, and they are less timid during the closed season, but they do not depart far enough from their instinctive tendencies to endanger by rashness the existence of the species. If the environment gradually alters, favorable variations enable the best representatives in each generation to cope with the new conditions, and in acquiring this power they undergo certain adaptive changes, but always in obedience to the demand of the one end which in nature is paramount—survival. Failing to meet nature's requirements, they die.

Variation is an organic response to new conditions. Even in sudden, sporadic alterations—mutations—the conservation of the new creation requires a favorable environment. Stimulating surroundings are always necessary either to produce a variation or to select for survival one that has appeared suddenly. If the conditions are unfavorable to variations they will not occur unless as mutations, and should one be produced in this manner it will be lost. Among plants and the lower

animals these creative alterations are left to unintelligent nature, and it is to be regretted that man, in rearing human beings, has shown less understanding of his problem than nature has of hers. For with the lower animals only one requirement prevails. If this demand is met, the species has learned its lesson, and the reward is life.

With man, however, the test of survival is no longer brute strength or mere cunning, but intelligence and ethical conduct, concerning which nature is a poor judge. Yet a large number of children are allowed to grow up in whatever place of filth and crime they may chance to be born, and to these conditions they adapt themselves according to nature's law. Slums are society's factory for the manufacture of criminals. No adequate plans are made to produce intellectual and ethical variations of a higher type suited to promote social progress. The one plan systematically carried out by society, aside from sporadic efforts of individual organizations, is compulsory education. As though a few hours each day in the school-room could produce desirable human variations against the resistance of an otherwise degrading, if not criminal, environment! Nature herself shows more intelligence, since she constantly surrounds the young intrusted to her care with an environment suited to her purposes.

We must not forget that "fitness" is a relative state, the character and value of which are determined by the environment. It is not a meritorious quality of standard excellence fixed for all times and all ages. We admit this when we say that a given man is ahead of his age, an idealist whose plans, perhaps, will work well some day, but not now, or when we agree that business success requires a certain conformity to prevailing business methods; but we deny it when we insist that boys of the slums should lead an ethical, moral life wholly at variance with the example of their parents and the conduct of their associates. This, however, only illustrates the working of the wonderful power of reason which distinguishes man from the lower animals and enables him to prove conclusively that what he wishes to do is right and what he does not wish others to do is wrong.

The adult has lived through experiences which have taught him the effect upon himself as well as upon others of anti-social acts. He has, therefore, acquired ideals of conduct resting, in part, upon ethical and, again, upon selfish motives, but all, it may be, of moral intent. For that reason the environment is a very different problem with him from what it is with children, whose ideals are still in the making and who, without the foundation of experience, do not know to what their actions lead.

Children's courts, which to-day are so prominent a feature of reform, are based upon the belief that the surroundings create the ideals of the young and train them in habits of conduct for which they should not otherwise be held responsible. They do not have the standards of judgment which in the adult serve as criteria of action. To say that the mind grows to the modes in which it is exercised is only another way of saying that it adapts itself to its environment.

If we ask for proof of the irresistible effect upon children of the environment in which they live, we need but to observe the change that follows improvement in even a few of the conditions of life. The New York City police captains, several years ago, told the committee on small parks that they had no trouble with boys who live in the neighborhood of playgrounds and parks. Here the spirit of adventure finds free vent without the explosions that smash street lamps, windows, and heads. In Chicago, the South Side, after two years of their system of small parks, "showed a decrease in delinquency of seventeen per cent, relative to the delinquency of the whole city, while the rest of the city had increased its delinquency twelve per cent, a showing in favor of the South Side of a difference of twenty-nine per cent, upon the supposition that without the small parks the



South Side would have continued to furnish its due quota of court wards as compared with the rest of the city.”<sup>1</sup> If we consider three districts in the South Side which are better equipped with playgrounds and apparatus than the other portions of that section, we find that two of them which had a rapid increase in population during the period under consideration showed a decrease in delinquency of twenty-eight and thirty-three per cent respectively, while the delinquency of the third, in which the population remained more nearly uniform, decreased seventy per cent. And this decrease occurred at a time when the delinquency of the entire city increased eleven per cent.<sup>2</sup>

In Saint Louis, again, the police reports have shown a decrease of fifty per cent in juvenile crime in the neighborhood of playgrounds during the summer months when they were open.<sup>3</sup>

The significance of this becomes even more striking when we learn further that in Saint Louis one boy out of about every thirty between the ages of eight and sixteen is arrested each year, and one out of every fifty is brought before the

<sup>1</sup> Allen Burns, reprint from the “Proceedings of the Second Annual Playground Congress,” p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> *Loc. cit.*, p. 11.

<sup>3</sup> “Report of the Open-Air Playground Committee, Civic League, 1903,” p. 6.

juvenile court.<sup>1</sup> Further, the president of the Saint Louis Board of Police Commissioners said, in testifying before the State Legislature in 1903, that "the great majority, probably ninety per cent, of the habitual or chronic criminals are persons who have committed their first offence against the laws when children under the age of sixteen."<sup>2</sup>

The Brotherhood Welfare Association of Saint Louis recently opened a gymnasium for boys on South Third Street, near the levee. It is a wretchedly unattractive, gloomy place with a few pieces of worn-out apparatus. Yet this gymnasium draws boys from a distance of fifteen blocks on the west and about ten blocks north and south. The boys awaken the keeper in the morning to gain admission. They spend three-quarters of an hour there at noon and hurry back after school. At night they will not leave until they are driven out. Before the establishment of this gymnasium, the boys of that region entertained themselves by breaking windows and in various other escapades which often ended in the juvenile court. Now, as the police officer on this beat says, all this is ended. The boys of that district are as well behaved as in other more orderly parts of the city.

The following table pictures the effect of a play-

<sup>1</sup> "Report of the Juvenile Court, 1908," p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> "Report of the Open-Air Playground Committee of the Civic League, 1903," p. 6.

ground on tardiness in a Milwaukee school. A vacant half-block adjoining the smaller playground of the school gives the children space enough to express their feelings. It will be noticed that there are 197 cases of tardiness during four months in this school of 850 children against 842 and 1,106, respectively, for the same period in two other schools containing only 600 pupils, but without playgrounds.

		TARDINESS				
		SEPT.	OCT.	NOV.	DEC.	TOTALS
Equipped playground	6th Dist. School, 850 pupils . . . . .	41	79	41	36	197
No playground	3d Dist. School, 600 pupils . . . . .	148	216	198	280	842
No playground	4th Dist. School, 600 pupils . . . . .	207	294	221	384	1,106

But the success of playgrounds opens a much larger question. If so small a change in the life of a boy as opportunity to play brings such results as the figures which we have cited indicate, is not society committing an inexcusable blunder in failing to organize for the abolition of slums? It would seem as though one portion of cities were set apart for the training of criminals. The case, however, is not closed with the evidence of playgrounds.

In Chicago, according to the superintendent of the Parental School, from eighty-two to ninety per cent of truancy is caused by unfavorable home conditions.<sup>1</sup> Truancy in that city has been found to be between three and four times as frequent, proportionately, among the children of those who live in the congested districts as among children of foreigners in other parts of the city.<sup>2</sup> That the lack of zeal of these children for education is not caused by stupidity is apparent from their progress when they have a chance. Eighty-two per cent of the boys in the Parental School show as good ability as other boys, and after the youngsters leave the institution, eighty per cent maintain a record of efficiency.<sup>3</sup> "We are firmly convinced," says the report, "that very few of our boys (not more than ten per cent—perhaps only about five per cent) would go wrong if placed in favorable conditions where they would get plenty of good food, proper care, discipline and training, and a fair chance to become decent citizens. This is clearly proved by the change which comes over these boys during their short stay at the Parental School, and the lapses of the other twenty per cent who go wrong after leaving us are due, in large measure, to the baneful influences which

<sup>1</sup> "Report of the Chicago Parental School," 1902, p. 36; 1904, p. 49.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 1906, p. 19.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 1904, p. 46.

they encounter after parole—not to natural, inherited, inherent meanness or depravity.”<sup>1</sup>

An instructive bit of information comes from the Boston Parental School. Some of the boys who were committed for truancy ran away just before their credits for behavior and attention to their studies warranted dismissal. When questioned, they admitted that they ran away so as to lose their credits and be retained in the institution, instead of being sent back to the public schools. The teachers make the difference.

When we examine the condition of boys who have gone beyond truancy and have started upon the criminal career, the same influence of environment is observed.

Examination of the records of 293 boys in the Indiana Boys' (Reform) School discloses the fact that the associates of 176 were clearly bad. In only 19 cases could they be called good. The remainder were fair.<sup>2</sup> The Illinois State Reformatory has reported on 500 inmates during two years. Of these boys only 27 were found to have had good associates.<sup>3</sup> In the Elmira Reformatory, again, the same condition is demonstrable. Here the officers have kept a biographical history of the inmates for a period of years. These records show

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, 1905, pp. 40-41.

<sup>2</sup> "Forty-third Annual Report, 1909," p. 36.

<sup>3</sup> "Tenth Biennial Report, 1908-1910," pp. 90, 112.

that the associates of 94 per cent of 19,810 prisoners were either bad or doubtful, and those of only 6 per cent were good.<sup>1</sup>

When we consider these same boys from the point of view of their ability, we again find corroborative evidence of the influence of environment in pulling them down. Two hundred and eighty-five of the 293 boys in the Indiana Boys' (Reform) School had ability which was either fair or "active," while only 8 were doubtful.<sup>2</sup> In the Illinois State Reformatory, 353 of the 500 boys included in the last report were of average ability, or above the average, and only 147 were below the average.<sup>3</sup> The Elmira report for 1910 does not classify the prisoners on the basis of mental ability, but an earlier investigation of 17,675 young men who had been in the institution shows that 97 per cent had ability rated as fair, good, or excellent, and only 3 per cent fell below the average.<sup>4</sup> Fifty-three per cent of the 19,810 young men referred to in the last report of the Elmira Reformatory had never been to school, or could barely read and write. Only 4 per cent had entered the high school. The remainder had received a common-school education.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Thirty-fifth Annual Report, 1910," p. 58.    <sup>2</sup> *Loc. cit.*, p. 36.

<sup>3</sup> "Tenth Biennial Report, 1908-1910," pp. 90, 112.

<sup>4</sup> "Thirty-third Annual Report," 1908, p. 85.

<sup>5</sup> "Thirty-fifth Annual Report, 1910," p. 57.

It would seem as though society were conducting a scientific experiment on a large scale in trying to ascertain how bad its children may be made and still be reformed, just as the poison squad of the Pure Food Commission has been used to learn how dangerous certain chemicals are in food.

I am aware that all this tendency to criminality may be charged to the account of ancestral inheritance. Heredity has always been a comfortable cushion upon which those who chanced to be born in happy surroundings have reclined, while they moralized upon the inherited taint of the less fortunate. Family pride gives such an agreeable feeling of superiority that men forget the occasions when social influence saved them, in boyhood, from arrest.

No intelligent person thinks that men are born equal in mental capacity or that the outlook for moral growth gives the same clear view of the future in different children. The present writer frankly accepts the belief that the quality of gray matter which makes the career of a genius possible is not produced during the lifetime of a single individual. Heredity is a tremendous social force. After admitting all this, however, the vital problem is still untouched. The practical question is not what is inherited, but rather what can be realized. Will the brain tissue be utilized to

its fullest capacity? Will the "born genius" always reveal his power? Or, to ask a still more practical question, will the average boy and girl actualize his or her possibilities?

Every one, doubtless, will admit that the genius is much more likely than the average boy to come into his own, regardless of adverse surroundings. Yet, even among these men there is a suggestive grouping in time and place. "The stimulating influence of great historical events, calling out latent intellectual energy," in the opinion of Havellock Ellis, plays its part in producing geniuses.<sup>1</sup> Cattell, again, as a result of his exhaustive study of American men of science, comes to the conclusion that "the inequality in the production of scientific men in different parts of the country seems to be a forcible argument against the views of Dr. Galton and Professor Pearson that scientific performance is almost exclusively due to heredity. It is unlikely that there are such differences in family stocks as would lead one part of the country to produce a hundred times as many scientific men as other parts."<sup>2</sup>

Odin, who made a careful investigation of the conditions operating in the production of men of letters, found that in France the towns which were especially prolific in eminent literary men differed

<sup>1</sup> "A Study of British Genius," p. 15.   <sup>2</sup> *Science*, vol. 24, p. 734.



from other places "less by their size than by a group of characteristics the chief of which seem to be the following":

1. "Usually these cities have been centres of administration, political, ecclesiastical, or judiciary. This confirms what we have previously stated with regard to the influence exercised by the political and administrative surroundings.

2. "These cities have furnished numerous opportunities for cultivating the acquaintance of people of culture and intelligence, because of the presence of writers, of savants, of numerous distinguished artists, of learned clergymen, and of a wealthy nobility devoted to letters.

3. "These cities have afforded important public intellectual resources, such as superior educational institutions, libraries, museums, and publishing houses.

4. "Finally, they contained, in comparison with other cities, a greater amount of wealth, or, at least, a larger proportion of wealthy or well-to-do families."<sup>1</sup>

"Everything, therefore," continues Odin a little later, "forces us to admit that education plays not only an important rôle in the production of men of letters, but one that is vital and decisive.

<sup>1</sup> "Genese des Grands Hommes," par Alfred Odin, vol. I, pp. 511-512.

It acts not alone upon those of moderate ability, but also, and with quite as great intensity, upon talent and genius." <sup>1</sup>

In order to test this principle still further, Odin investigated the early environment of 264 eminent literary men of other countries. "The figures," he then tells us, "are almost identical with those that were obtained for eminent men of letters in France. From a total of 236 men of genius whose early educational environment we know pretty accurately, not less than 230, or 97 per cent, had an opportunity during their youth to come into contact with a favorable educational environment. Even if we were to class all the cases (the 28 omitted above) in which the surroundings are unknown or doubtful, under the head of poor educational environment, and that surely would not correspond with the facts, there still remains more than 87 per cent of cases in which the educational environment was favorable." <sup>2</sup> And again, in the earnestness of his conviction, Odin exclaims, "We must reverse the accepted view. Genius is in things and not in man." <sup>3</sup>

Galton himself, the apostle, with Karl Pearson, of heredity says in this connection: "I acknowledge freely the great power of education and social influences in developing the active powers of

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 527.    <sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 604-605.    <sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 560.

the mind, just as I acknowledge the effect of use in developing the muscles of a blacksmith's arm, and no further." <sup>1</sup>

No one could ask Mr. Galton to go further. He has acknowledged all that the advocates of the influence of environment claim. It has never been asserted, so far at least as the writer is aware, that environment puts brains into people.

Dr. F. A. Woods, on the other hand, argues strongly for heredity. His argument, however, is not thoroughly convincing, especially when we find him distinguishing, in respect to environmental influence, between "imposed and unescapable conditions, which change with the course of history and affect entire races or great groups of people," and "the class of environments that exist within any one age and in any one state of civilization." <sup>2</sup>

We have introduced this brief survey of a few of the chief investigations on the production of men of genius because of its bearing upon the influence of environment. The facts seem to show that "nurture" exercises a decisive and probably determining influence upon the ability with which one may be endowed at birth.

But let us return to the delinquent boys and

<sup>1</sup> "Hereditary Genius," p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> *Popular Science Monthly*, vol. 76, p. 336.

learn the effect upon them of a new environment.

Under such meagre inspiration as a reformatory can offer, from seventy-five to over eighty per cent of those released from the Elmira Reformatory became honest citizens.<sup>1</sup>

The Lyman (Massachusetts) Reform School reports that "the total percentage of boys who became twenty-one years of age this year, and who are living in the community much as others who have never been in the Lyman School," is estimated at about 80.<sup>2</sup> From the New York Parental School, again, 85 per cent are said to "make good."<sup>3</sup>

Superintendent Darnall, of the Washington National Training School for Boys, says that about 80 per cent of the white boys "make good." The same percentage of the Michigan Industrial School "make law-abiding, self-respecting citizens," according to Superintendent Lawson.

In Illinois the board of managers of the Pontiac State Reformatory made a thorough investigation of the record of 780 boys paroled to Chicago between July, 1901, and January, 1906, and found that over 83 per cent did not become violators of the law after their release.<sup>4</sup> "It is safe to assert," the

<sup>1</sup> See various reports of the institution.

<sup>2</sup> "Sixteenth Annual Report, 1911," p. 36.

<sup>3</sup> Letter from the principal.

<sup>4</sup> "Eighth Biennial Report, 1906," p. 30.

report concludes, "that the percentage of reclamations will not be lower in any portion of the United States than in Chicago, with the peculiar temptations to vice and crime which have hitherto existed."

These statistics, which the author is convinced from his correspondence with superintendents could be duplicated from the records of any reformatory conducted according to modern methods, did space permit, gain their strength from the fact that *these children were selected by the street*. They came of the sort of stock whose children are allowed to obtain most of their education from the street. All of the parents were shiftless, many were drunkards, and not a few of the mothers were prostitutes. According to the advocates of irresistible heredity, the presumption is that their heredity was bad. Yet the number of reformations is amazingly large.

If so many boys who have been branded with the prison mark, and who must continually work against the resistance of a criminal's name, can be reformed, the inference seems clear that a large part of the remaining twenty or twenty-five per cent might have been saved had the change of environment come earlier in their career. We are proud of our public schools, and we enjoy calling them the bulwark of democracy, but we demand

more than any system of education can accomplish when we ask it to make good citizens out of boys whose home and street environment is in direct opposition to the teaching of the school. The compulsory-education law drags unwilling boys from a life that gratifies their longing for adventure to work which has no meaning to them on account of the enormous chasm between the life of an educated man and their own. The educational problem and the industrial-social problem are one. And the success of popular government makes its solution imperative.

Though mere opinion has little argumentative value, still the feeling of confidence in the delinquent boy which one finds in the officers of reformatory institutions where boys are trusted is suggestive in this connection. Under the old system of suspicion and guards, the boys respond with similar distrust. But in the Cleveland Boys' Home, where responsibility is put upon the boys, we find a former superintendent saying, "I believe that any boy under fourteen can readily be changed in his wrong views of life and in their resulting conduct."<sup>1</sup> The present superintendent cites one instance as typical: "The boy who takes care of the office, and is around where things could be taken without really fastening the guilt upon

<sup>1</sup> Letter from former Superintendent McGilvrey.

him, had been in court seven times for stealing before we received him. We have yet to find anything missing or to catch him in a lie.”<sup>1</sup>

The argument for environment is greatly strengthened when we see the result upon adults in whom the habits of shiftlessness and criminality are thought to be firmly established. In 1905 two men just paroled from the Cleveland House of Correction rented a room and asked Director Cooley to parole two of their acquaintances. “We have a room for them and will grub-stake them for a week, and can get them a job,”<sup>2</sup> they said. From this small beginning grew the Brotherhood Club, which, in three years, received nearly \$14,000 for board and lodging from its members. By 1908 the club had paid for over \$2,000 worth of furniture and, during that year, \$6,153.54 were spent in caring for paroled men; \$4,646.07 of this was later paid back by these same men. The balance came out of the treasury of the club. With the exception of \$1,340, which was contributed, and a small debt, the entire cost was borne by paroled men. “We have found that many men who are regarded as criminals are trustworthy when trusted,” says Director of Public Safety Cooley. “Some of the

<sup>1</sup> Letter from Superintendent Laird.

<sup>2</sup> “Annual Report of the Brotherhood Club, 1908.”

prisoners who give the most trouble under the old treatment are our best men in the out-door method. They are men of backbone, who resent ill-treatment by officious guards. They are stubborn in punishment. But if these men promise to be faithful, they will stand by you. . . . Many men who are regarded as unwilling to work will develop habits of industry if given a good opportunity. The regular life at the Correction Farm and the work in the fields overcome the vagrancy tendency.”<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps the most startling instance of readaptation to a new environment in the case of adults is found in the Colorado State Penitentiary. Here the men leave the prison and work on the construction of new roads. But let us allow Warden Tynan to tell the story:

“We employ these men, many of whom are serving life terms for murder, two hundred miles away from the prison proper. The men are housed in tents and dug-outs away from the towns near at hand. The camps are guarded only to keep away the tramps and prowlers who might attack our commissary or feed-rooms or carry away our effects. For a long time the only man who had fire-arms in one of the camps was a long-time prisoner who patrolled the place at night for the above reason.

<sup>1</sup> Extract from a letter from Director Cooley.



"A lifetime man drives my carriage and waits upon my family with perfect trust. The lifetime men understand that the fact of their being trustworthy and honorable will hasten the end of their terms, as the sentences of some have been commuted and others will be, so that the men may go on parole. We endeavor to show the prisoners that if they play fair with us we will act in the same way toward them.

"We have now nearly three hundred men employed away from the walls and yet in eight months past we have lost but one man by escape.

"About one per cent of the men employed on their 'honor' broke faith and escaped during the past two years. The inmates who responded to their parole contracts and maintained a good character after leaving, during the past two years of my incumbency, have been about eighty per cent, and many are doing quite well. Some of them are succeeding in business.

"So you see that I have found many men whom society has condemned and the courts convicted worthy of the most perfect trust."<sup>1</sup>

Whatever may be said about the common people under a monarchy, where a chosen few are appointed by the Almighty to do the thinking for the nation, in a democracy where votes count, and the success and welfare of society depend on

<sup>1</sup> Letter from Warden Tynan.

the intelligence and character of its citizens, we cannot afford to leave the training of boys and girls to the alleys and streets.

The success of playgrounds and reformatories of the better sort in making good citizens has a profound significance which society blindly ignores. It shows the delicate sensitiveness of children to their environment. Character depends upon both inherited and environmental influences, and the conditions of life which surround children may favor the appearance of bad hereditary impulses, or, on the other hand, may prevent them from emerging. Proof of this is seen in experiments on lower animals. Nothing is more firmly fixed by heredity than some of the protective instincts, and yet, as Hodge has shown, the wild ruffed grouse of the partridge family, hatched under barn-yard fowls are as tame as domestic chicks if their surroundings do not call out the inherited timidity.

Hereditary tendencies are strongly intrenched, and blue-blood stock possesses enough bad ones to people the penitentiaries were conditions left favorable to the development of primitive instincts. Fortunately growth of character does not require the destruction of these racial instincts. Relentless courage and resistance to aggression are as valuable assets to-day as among primitive sav-

ages where they brought bloodshed and torture. Social progress, however, demands that these impulses be controlled by ethical motives so that man may act rationally and be thoughtful of the larger interests of human society. {Children are impulsive. They do not possess the principles of conduct which control action in the mature. Morality is a matter of habit long before it is a rule of action. This is the reason for the importance of environment. } But philanthropic man is more interested in building reformatories than in reorganizing society to eliminate the need for them. Reformatories appeal to the emotions which are usually soothed by construction of buildings, or with the accomplishment of some reform within the institution. The nervous social neophyte is thus enabled to become enthusiastic over many reforms in rapid succession, and reforms, like clothes, are stylish for a day. Social reorganization, however, reaches a long distance into the future and requires sustained mental effort—a condition of mind which has never been popular. All our reformatory activities illustrate the charming inconsistency of man. They are based on the assumption that the will has decided limitations which prevent it from overcoming too strong opposition. Yet according to the popular opinion man's will is supreme.

Much of the confusion in which society finds itself involved comes from mistaken ideas about the will. The opinion still prevails among many that it is a force distinct from other mental processes, which decides our conduct regardless of motives or of hereditary and environmental influences. According to this view the will is a monarch sitting on his throne and continually interrupting the causal relation of mental processes by determining through his fiat the acts which shall be performed, regardless of the nature of the individual. But those who hold this opinion are not uncritical of others who react differently to situations essentially the same to unprejudiced observers. This inconsistency of the critic is due to the fact that the practical judgment is often more correct than the theoretical. The criticism is just. A person who does not always act in the same way in the same situation would have an anarchistic will. Such a will would be governed by no laws, and if a man were unfortunate enough to be so constructed, his honesty up to the present day would be no proof that he would not steal your watch to-morrow. That which constitutes a strong character is consistency in action, so long as all of the conditions remain the same, and intelligence reveals itself in discriminative interpretation of differences in situations.

The same situation, however, means essentially identical mental and external relations. The outer conditions, for example, may remain unaltered while the mental conditions vary. That is to say, the ideas of the man may have changed or the emotional effect of the situation may be different. Though he has never stolen he may come to the conclusion that the world owes him a living, regardless of his willingness to work. This introduces a new condition in his actions and he may rob you if he has a chance. If the will were not influenced by motives, the development of character through education would be impossible. Our whole mind is will, and, like all mental processes, it is concordant to psychological laws. Indeed, the stronger the will of a man the more confidently do we predict his action. We know that to him motives of honor are irresistible. Hesitation before acting signifies that the decision is simultaneously influenced by several conflicting motives. If the opposing psychological states did not exist, there would be no hesitation. When a man finally decides, it means that one of the various lines of action has won approval.

Let us suppose a boy to deliberate about a dishonest act which, if successfully carried through, will yield a handsome profit. The advantages of the transaction, together with the possible con-

sequences of discovery, are the external conflicting motives; but in addition to these, there are the mental conditions—the personality acquired from the interaction of inherited tendencies and individual experience gained through social and educational influences—which we call character. These mental relations are the factors over which society and education have partial control, and for which they are, to the extent of that control, responsible. But society has thrown the burden upon the schools, forgetful of the inconsistency of arraying two opposing social forces, the slums and the schools, against one another.

The success of philanthropic organizations and reformative institutions seems to justify the assertion of those who maintain that criminals are made and not born. While admitting the influence of good homes we cannot consistently deny the effect of bad surroundings. The decision of a boy in the presence of temptation will largely depend upon the ideals of life which have been acquired through experience—the stuff out of which thoughts are made. The moral purpose in education is attained, then, by accustoming children to ethical habits of conduct while enriching their minds with ideals of action which may develop into controlling principles of life.

Children unconsciously accept the views of life

amid which they live. The acts in which they engage are the things to do because they are performed by those whom they look upon as examples for emulation. So their character is fixed by the establishment of habits of action. It is not strange that those who live in the slums become criminals. The wonder is that so many are reclaimed, and the remarkable success of the newer reformative methods puts the responsibility for the vast majority of criminals upon the society which allows conditions that train for delinquency to continue.

The will-to-do-right cannot be developed by a few weeks' course in mental and moral gymnastics. It is a matter of slow, continuous growth, and when once fixed can rarely be more than superficially altered. Character, which is only another name for the established will, is formed through ideals which have been consciously or unconsciously accepted as governing principles of action. And these ideals can become fixed only so far as they are acted upon. For this reason moral precepts have little value for children when the instruction is at variance with the conduct that surrounds them. When society learns this and organizes to preserve children from immoral surroundings, instead of giving them a few doses of mental and moral antitoxin and then sending them

back to dirty alleys and streets, criminality will cease to be so perplexing a problem.

The schools, on the other hand, cannot ignore their responsibility. They have a higher function than merely to teach the three R's. One of the purposes of elementary and secondary education is to train children in such activities as will organize the mental processes so as to strengthen the social will. We have indicated in a previous chapter the method by which this may be done. The life of the school should be organized on a social basis so that its activities will call out the responsibility of social relations. The work of the teacher, as we have said, is to create these situations and to suggest lines of action so subtly that the children believe the thoughts to be their own. School is, after all, only society organized for educative purposes. The failure, from the ethical standpoint, in the social organization is that everything is disjointed. The various organizations for mental and moral development are attached to one another like the cars of a train, and the separation causes many to fall under the wheels. Much of the training formerly given in the home must now be received in the school. Home and school should be united in concerted action through neighborhood centres in which the teachers are quite as much the leaders of parents as of children. This, naturally, calls for a high grade of



teachers, but any other procedure leads to the absurdity of a variety of environments each warring against the others for the control of the children. Man should not be inferior to the lower animals in the matter of having a clearly defined purpose in life. With the latter it is mere survival, but the goal of human society should be social and ethical progress. Success here requires organization of social forces for the common end. Intelligence puts this responsibility upon man.

The occasional rise of men from obscurity to distinction proves that ability is present in all classes, and society should plan to help it emerge. The accomplishment of this makes the demand for the abolition of slums imperative. It was the recognition of this diffusion of talent throughout the social strata that led Gray to exclaim:

“Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid  
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;  
Hands that the rod of empire might have sway’d,  
Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre.

“But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page  
Rich with the spoils of time did ne’er unroll;  
Chill Penury repress’d their noble rage,  
And froze the genial current of the soul.

“Some village Hampden that with dauntless breast  
The little tyrant of his fields withstood,  
Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,  
Some Cromwell guiltless of his country’s blood.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard.”

## CHAPTER IV

### THE SCHOOL AND THE COMMUNITY

THE purpose of the public schools is to educate children. Like all platitudes this one has been stereotyped into a fixed meaning. Educational opportunity is the idea. Construct a great public-school system, open the doors to all, and the work is done. But suppose a large proportion of the children decline the opportunity, while a great part of those who accept are eliminated by the crude machinery of the system. What then? This is the situation in our country to-day.

Van Denburg<sup>1</sup> found, in his investigation of elimination from the high schools of New York City, that, in one group of 350, the members of which entered at the normal age of fourteen, 99 boys out of 129 were eliminated, and 163 girls out of 221 suffered the same fate.

After showing that pupils rated high in results stayed in school from two to three times as long as those with low rating, Van Denburg concludes that "the waste which characterizes the sifting process in New York City is typical of a situation

<sup>1</sup> "Elimination of Students in Public Secondary Schools," p. 92.

which is not local or individual. The high schools are being crowded with thousands eager for some taste of secondary education, among whom are a few who can and will work forward to successful graduation under the present sifting process. Yet with these, who can and will, are more who can but will not, because our process of selection or sifting is crude and defective; and so we lose this latter, equally good, material through the inefficiency of our present methods of selection.”<sup>1</sup>

Thorndike concludes from his statistical study of the elimination of pupils from the public schools that in cities of 25,000 and over, 90 children out of 100 remain until they reach the fourth grammar grade, 81 continue to the fifth grade, 68 to the sixth, 54 to the seventh, 40 to the last grammar grade, 27 to the first high-school year, 17 to the second, 12 to the third, and 8 to the fourth. In other words, considerably more than half of the children have been eliminated at the end of the grammar school, and in the fourth year of the high school only 8 out of 100 remain.<sup>2</sup>

“At least twenty-five out of one hundred children of the white population of our country who enter school stay only long enough to learn simple

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 160.

<sup>2</sup> See “The Elimination of Pupils from School,” by Edward L. Thorndike. “United States Bureau of Education, Bulletin No. 4, 1907.”

English, write such words as they commonly use, and perform the four operations for integers without serious errors.

"Only about a third graduate from an elementary school of seven grades or more.

"Only about half have any teaching of consequence concerning the history of their own country or any other, or concerning the world's literature, science, or art."<sup>1</sup>

"The fact that the elimination is so great in the first year of the high school," Thorndike continues, "gives evidence that a large share of the fault lies in the kind of education given in the high schools. One can hardly suppose that very many of the parents who send children on to the high school do so with no expectation of keeping them there over a year, or that a large number of the children who complete the elementary school course and make a trial of the high school are so stupid and uninterested in being educated that they had better be got rid of in the first year."

Valuable information regarding the attitude of children toward their schools has been obtained by the United States Commissioner of Labor.<sup>2</sup> Six hundred and seventeen children from seven towns in different parts of the country were visited

<sup>1</sup> Thorndike., *op. cit.*, pp. 9-10.

<sup>2</sup> "Report on the Condition of Woman and Child Wage-earners in the United States," vol. VII, pp. 110-111.

at their homes and questions were asked in such a way as to elicit a frank expression of opinion and free discussion. Of these 617 children, practically 49 per cent were not satisfied with their school, and 51 per cent were satisfied. The chief cause of dissatisfaction was "a dislike of the general manner of life in school."

While the report of the commissioner shows a relation between inability to make progress in the school and dissatisfaction, it is, nevertheless, a striking fact that thirty-nine and a half per cent of the pupils rated as "bright" by their teachers were dissatisfied with the school conditions.<sup>1</sup>

Evidence that the dislike of school or teacher was too deeply rooted to be eradicated by manual or industrial training was indicated, at least in the case of these children, by the fact that sixty-two per cent of those who were dissatisfied said that they would not wish to continue with their work were these arts introduced.<sup>2</sup> This, however, shows the weak hold which the school had on these boys and girls rather than lack of influence on the part of industrial training to keep them at their studies. Twenty-five per cent of both groups who were withdrawing—the satisfied and dissatisfied—would certainly have continued their school-work had they been able to combine it with training in one

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 120-121.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 123.

of the industries, and others who denied it when questioned would probably have been favorably influenced.

"On the whole it may be said that the Americans and other English-speaking [children] were less satisfied with the schools than the foreigners" (except in one town). "Our Anglo-Saxon conceit might lead us to attribute the uncritical attitude of the foreigners to their inferior intelligence but for the somewhat disconcerting fact that it is among the Americans and other English-speaking children that the largest percentage of failure to progress is found."<sup>1</sup>

The Massachusetts Commission on Industrial Education also found by its investigation that "it is dissatisfaction on the part of the child that takes him from school."<sup>2</sup>

It is a commonplace of psychology that we interpret and value ideas in terms of our past experience. Those who have no intimate associations with educational values cannot be expected to be impressed with the importance of knowledge. They often consider it a luxury which poor people cannot afford. Yet it is the unschooled class that sets the social and educational standards by which the lives of large numbers of children are

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 114.

<sup>2</sup> Report, 1906, "Columbia University Reprints, No. 1," p. 44.

irrevocably determined. Since the problems of democracy centre around the wage-earners of the congested parts of cities, the social good imperatively demands that the schools be made to appeal to the personal interests of the inhabitants. Parents must be made to feel that so much education as the public schools offer is essential to the welfare of their children.

A democracy, in its final analysis, must rest on the good-will and intelligence of its constituents, and if a popular government with such diverse traditions and interests as our own is to live, it will be on account of the social and ethical ideals acquired in the public schools. But the children must attend because their parents wish them to be there, as well as from their own choice, and not because they are led by a truant officer. We all believe in compulsory-education laws, but we must also admit that, like every other form of coercion, their necessity reveals a weakness in the system. Forced acquiescence is needed in an emergency, but as a principle of action it is proof of administrative inadequacy. A teacher who secures obedience through fear of punishment, like a government that maintains order by threats or by constant police interference, is inefficient. In like manner a public-school system may compel all children under fourteen years of age to attend

school without displaying any exceptional educational efficiency. If children are to be educated in any proper sense of the word, they must attend because they desire to go, not because the law requires it. The function of the truant officer, then, is to bridge over a time of reorganization, of readaptation. If truant officers are required, there is evidently a lack of adjustment between the school and a portion of the community, and the larger community, society, has a right to insist that the cause of this maladjustment be investigated and remedied. I admit the difficulty of the problem, but its complexity does not lessen our responsibility for its solution. The importance of the question is so great that it must receive attention.

Not only do parents in congested districts lack interest in public education, but they are almost suspicious of the ease with which it may be obtained. Disposal of wares requires more than merely offering a good thing at a low price. This is equally true whether we try to sell goods or offer education, and the lower the price the harder it is many times to win acceptance. During the Saint Louis Exposition, a man who had just purchased an entrance ticket received a message calling him downtown on business. As he did not wish to throw the ticket away, he tried to give



it to some of those who were waiting in line at the ticket-office. To his astonishment not one of the half dozen to whom he offered it would accept the gift. It was so cheap that they were suspicious of his motives. It is much the same with public-school education. It is so easily obtained that some of the very ignorant who do not appreciate its value, those whom we ought especially to reach, think we are trying to get the better of them.

To create this desire for learning among the unschooled is an important preliminary to any solution of the public-school question. But such an appeal can never be made except by admitting the claims of human nature, and by making an accurate analysis of the environment in which this nature works. The most perplexing thing in the world and the most difficult to comprehend is this apparently simple human element, because each of us possesses a different specimen of it. The trouble is that we assume too much similarity in motives of conduct, and, of course, our own state is thought to be a sample of what the minds of others should be. Yet, as we know very well, when we pause to think, human nature is exceedingly diverse and coquettish. It must be closely investigated by study of the various types of population and the conditions amid which they live,

in order to ascertain the effective motives of action among different groups of men, and then the schools should be organized to appeal to these motives. I am entirely willing to admit that the educational incentives to which we must adapt ourselves may often be narrowly utilitarian in outlook, yet it is necessary to respect both human nature and human necessity; the first step is to bring children into the schools and the second to keep them there. After they have been won, a skilled teacher can unite even utilitarian subjects with much that makes for good citizenship and culture. But the fundamental thing is to win the co-operation of different communities by appealing to their distinctive points of view.

After prejudices against the schools have been overcome and the children secured from the tenement districts, these youngsters cannot be nourished on stereotyped education. The courses of study should be different from those in other parts of the city. Here, at least, trade-learning has its important place in the higher grades of the grammar school. Investigations have shown that, especially in crowded districts, large buildings drawing pupils from a wide area are a mistake from an educational point of view. Public schools, like playgrounds, have a certain radius of efficiency and beyond this distance, in the congested dis-

tricts, they do not exert sufficient influence over the residents to attract the children to them. In the immediate outlay, smaller buildings scattered through a region now cared for by one large building, would be more expensive, but it is cheaper to train boys in this comparatively expensive way than to support them later as criminals. Further, the most skilful teachers who can be secured should be placed in these districts. What can be accomplished with small classes and exceptional teachers is shown by the report of the superintendent of the Boston schools. Speaking of two disciplinary classes, the superintendent says: "In both classes [composed of truants and others who had made trouble in their schools] the deportment of the pupils has been excellent, the attendance regular, the interest in the work great, and the progress of the pupils satisfactory. . . . *The most serious difficulty that has been met in these classes arises when the attempt is made to return some of the boys to the school from which they came.*"<sup>1</sup> In other words, the boys enjoyed the work in the disciplinary classes so much that they did not require attention from the truant officers, but the old antagonism to study reappeared as soon as they returned to their regular classes.

<sup>1</sup> "Report of the Superintendent of Schools, Boston, 1908." The italics are the author's.

Two elements contribute to the success of these disciplinary classes: better teachers and fewer pupils. "With scarcely an exception, pupils whose school-work and behavior, under ordinary conditions, have been valueless to themselves and detrimental to their classmates, have become, in the disciplinary classes, interested in their work, and therefore obedient and punctual."<sup>1</sup>

In visiting one of these classes the writer noticed that a number of boys remained after school to play checkers. On inquiry he learned that this was common, and the teacher added that several were frequently on hand in the morning, ready for work, half an hour before the beginning of school. Yet these were boys who had been sent to this school for lack of interest in their studies, and because their teachers could not manage them. It is something of a social anomaly that parents who wish their boys to receive the best public-school education must send them to the classes intended for truants and incorrigibles.

The prevailing unwillingness to accept the proffered education presents a serious educational situation. School boards and superintendents may settle down in their dignity and point to the educational opportunity; orators with more pa-

<sup>1</sup> "Report of the Superintendent of Public Schools, Boston, 1909," p. 16.

triotic optimism than intelligence may rant over our glorious public-school system; the fact still remains that even magnificent buildings splendidly equipped and manned by good teachers do not fulfil the educational obligations. Obviously, the schools must educate the children and not merely offer opportunity. The time when the blame can be put upon the child is gone. That excuse went with original sin. Curiously enough, also, from the standpoint of the teachers who find so many incorrigibles, men who know how to deal with them and who receive the worst samples of "bad boys," testify that boys are after all pretty much alike. Why, then, are so many incorrigibles found in the schools, and why are so many eliminated on account of stupidity? Why, again, and this includes the previous questions and much besides, why do so many children withdraw because they are "tired of school"?

Evidently the public schools are not educating the children of the nation. Hardly more than ten per cent of those entering the first grade, as Professor Thorndike and others have shown, remain in school long enough to obtain more knowledge than is barely sufficient for the needs of the simplest existence. The remainder leave with no adequate or enduring knowledge of those subjects which are the basis of the intellectual life.

The school authorities can solve this problem of educational failure for themselves or they can wait until the situation becomes so intolerable that the people take the solution out of their hands, a time now fast approaching. The New York City schools have just been investigated by an expert employed by the Committee on School Inquiry of the Board of Estimate and Apportionment. Neither the board of education nor the superintendent had any control over the investigation. This plan is likely to become fashionable unless school authorities awaken to their social responsibilities.

The number of children who withdraw when hardly half through the grammar grades indicates that the mass of the people are not interested in the schools beyond securing for their children just enough elementary education to enable them to read, write, and cipher. Some even regard the school as an inexcusable interference with their parental prerogative. This is particularly noticeable in the congested parts of cities. One cause of the general indifference is that the schools have stood aloof from the people. Requirements have been put upon the community without opportunity for discussion. The result is protest which expresses itself in various ways according to the traditions of the protestants. Riots even have

occurred in New York City. In smaller places the protest is more likely to take the form of sullen apathy or withdrawal of the child.

Now, under a democracy the people cannot be successfully handled by monarchical methods. They insist upon being consulted. Otherwise they refuse to play the game. In extreme cases they revolt. I do not say that the demand for participation in the management of affairs is always wisely made or intelligently directed. I am calling attention to a common characteristic. The story of the donkey that begged permission to keep his ears dry under the traveller's tent and finally took entire possession by kicking out the man who had reluctantly and begrudgingly granted one request after another, was written by a psychologist. Give a people self-government in one thing and they will finally demand it in everything. What they will do if their demand is denied depends upon the importance which the proceedings assume in their minds. They may fight for their right to be heard or they may ignore the whole thing. The latter policy is usually pursued toward the schools. Many men of affairs consider them of little importance compared with their business, deeming them not worth fighting about. This is likely to leave the control of the schools, so far as the public has any influence, to

those who derive pleasure or profit in exploiting them for the benefit of friends who are appreciative of small favors. These men then represent the popular voice in the election of boards of education, and in the formation of public sentiment concerning the adequate qualities of superintendents and teachers. This is especially evident in the smaller towns. The less of other business a man has, in the present *laissez faire* method of the schools, the more is he willing to fight for his democratic right to rule their destinies. It may be that he only wishes to secure a position as teacher for his daughter. But results are relative, as we said a moment ago. Average men of affairs, not being educated in public spirit, fight for their right to rule only when the expense of the system becomes so great as to make the question important if compared with their own business. That is the situation in New York City to-day.

My statement was that one reason for the lack of an intelligent public interest in the schools is the fact that participation has not been encouraged by the school officials. Interest promotes interference, and that is very abhorrent to superintendents. In justice to these gentlemen it is only fair to add that their objection is a trifle human as well as school-masterish. We are a democratic nation not altogether because we be-



lieve in the rule of the people; our democracy is reinforced by our objecting to being ruled by some one else. There are many fervent democrats who would believe in a monarchy provided they were king. Each one feels that he knows a little better than any one else how things should be done. Besides, man has not yet evolved out of the primitive love for superior authority to which we alluded in an earlier chapter.

But man has a counterbalancing characteristic without which democracy would be impossible. It was seen in considering self-government among boys that they yield gracefully when the majority is against them. This is the saving feature of democracy. Love of authority does not require that the individual rule alone. Were that the case society would be in perpetual revolt. The feeling is measurably satisfied when one is conscious that his opinion counts.

In democracies, whatever the differences, the common factor is that man insists upon exercising his authority in some way. In our early history the town meeting satisfied this requirement of men. Now that the country has outgrown the old form of these gatherings, their place must be filled by something that will meet the same need—*i. e.*, the demand for participation in the management of affairs not only in politics but in education—and

by ignoring this mental fact, school officials have produced an attitude of dangerous indifference toward the schools. It remains to consider how the community interest may be awakened.

If we have rightly sketched the mental attitude of a democratic people toward their institutions, then schools must have a closer contact with those from whom they expect support. The use of the school buildings as "social centres" has been thought to meet this need. In Rochester, New York, a school building in one of the better sections of the city was selected for the experiment. This neighborhood was chosen for the first "centre" in order to avoid the opposition which those in the congested districts are inclined to feel toward organizations which make invidious distinctions between different communities. "A month after the opening, a merchant, whose place of business was near the 'centre,' as the school building in which the meetings are held is called, stopped the director on the street to say, 'The social centre has accomplished what I regarded as impossible. I have been here nine years, and during that time there has always been a gang of toughs around these corners, which has been a continual nuisance. This winter the gang has disappeared.'"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Rochester Social Centres and Civic Clubs; The Story of the First Two Years."

The gang had been transformed into a debating club.

"The first time I attended a social centre in Rochester," says the editor of *The Boston Common*, "was on a Sunday afternoon. In one room were one hundred and ten natives of Italy, chiefly day laborers. They were of the age and kind often associated by ignorant Americans with Sunday debauchery and stabbing affrays. But here they were studying American history and learning to speak the English language. They were too busy earning wages to study during the week; but for the social centre open on Sunday afternoons they, too, might have had to seek fellowship in some villainous back room at the price of liquor and disorder." <sup>1</sup>

School buildings as social centres have also been tried in Chicago. The Kinzie School is situated in the midst of one of the factory and cheap rooming districts. The principal, who has followed the work closely, says that the activities of the "centre" have brought families together in support of the school, among whom more than twenty different languages are spoken. New-comers into the neighborhood have more rapidly adopted the spirit of the school, and loyalty is more in evidence among those who have withdrawn. Perhaps it is

<sup>1</sup> *The Boston Common*, February 4, 1911.

owing to this new feeling of loyalty that five girls and five boys from families whose children have never before remained in school beyond the age required by law have just graduated from the grammar school. At all events, it is quite certain that this is the reason why five boys returned to school to finish their course after having left at the legal age to work. This becomes more significant from the fact that there are hardly more than four hundred pupils in the school, and the "centre" has been in operation about two years. The residents of the Kinzie district are now beginning to look upon this school as a part of their family life. The women of the ward, through their club, recently demanded that a disreputable resort with saloon attachment, near the school, be closed. And they accomplished their purpose, though the proprietor, through political influence, for two years had defied the efforts of the Juvenile Protective League.

The social centres have an added significance because modern cities are too large to sustain a uniform and continuous civic spirit. To produce this spirit there must be many local feeders. Questions are often of community importance, uninteresting to those in other sections. At present, municipal reforms come in waves, and during the interval, between the crests of civic enthusiasm,

the people appear indifferent to the quality of their government. The different communities in a city have their own system of social values, depending, among other things, upon the active traditions of the locality. Some of these communities are almost as isolated, socially and intellectually, as they would be on an oceanic island. This is true of certain foreign settlements in our midst, as well as of others of a more heterogeneous nature. Ideas spring up and are perpetuated within these social groups without any definite relation to the larger civic life beyond. To harmonize these social variants so that they may be adjusted to civic progress is one of the perplexing questions which city life has forced upon society, and it is one with which the schools, if they broaden their ideas, are peculiarly fitted to deal. These people require something closer to them, something more intimately associated with their daily lives, something more tangible than the abstract idea of good government or the city hall. Now the public schools are pre-eminently adapted to foster this community spirit. They are the part of the social organism that comes into the most natural and intimate contact with the welfare of the community. They are free from the traditions and emotional adhesions that cluster around religious and charitable organizations and which arouse

prejudice, unwarranted though it may be, against their endeavor to improve conditions. At all events, those in the congested areas of cities seem more willing to unite for the school than for any other purpose.

A revival of community spirit similar to that of the Kinzie School district has been observed in Minneapolis. The principal of the Seward School, writing of the social centre in his building, says: "Already I see a new interest taken in the school by parents and pupils as well as by teachers. There is more of the spirit of co-operation. The school means more to the district. The social centre is a place where all may gather together and talk about the things which are worth talking about. It is, and will continue to be, a force for the making of cleaner politics." Politics, however, are not the only thing that social centres may help to cleanse. In Milwaukee a man who had erected a large theatre for a low class of shows asked the board of education to close one of the centres because it was ruining his business.

Whatever good has already resulted from this new use of the school-house springs from the revived feeling among the people that these buildings are really their own. They are gathering-places for such companionship as their nature

craves, for man is a gregarious animal whose instincts are much thwarted by the defective social arrangement of modern times. The social instinct has been ignored, and this impulse is especially strong in those who have not the resources within themselves which education gives, and who work all day at hard manual labor. They crave companionship, and those who understand this fundamental human need should supply a place where it may be satisfied in a manner that may lead to social growth. Why should not the school buildings be equipped to compete with dance halls for evening patronage? If this were done, the parents would come to feel that the schools belong to them. It would awaken a community spirit which is the essence of democracy. Here men could hold their meetings for the discussion of labor problems. The political nature of the meetings could arouse no reasonable objection if the buildings were at the disposal of any party that wished to reach the people of the community. "The school-houses are the real places for political meetings," exclaimed the chairman of the Democratic County Committee at a meeting called in Rochester to decide whether the request of a Republican club to use the school building for committee meetings should be granted.

Problems of poverty, its cause and the means

of its elimination, could be studied and discussed. Certain evenings might well be designated for these questions and citizens outside of the district invited to be present and participate. It is safe to say that the millionaire, if he would attend, might gain no less profit from these discussions than the day laborer. "How the other half live" would afford valuable material for thought for both halves. These questions will not down, and the place for their discussion should not be limited to the corner saloon and the rich men's clubs—the present gathering-places for the social extremes. There should be some appointed room in which men in all conditions of life could come together on an equal footing and where the information gathered in recent years could be made the basis of deliberation. Such meetings held in school buildings under the auspices of the board of education would be the best sort of social universities, and the writer can say from personal attendance at similar gatherings that the accurate formulation of facts would not be given wholly by college statisticians. The amount of reading and study which some of the "laborers" have given to these questions is, many times, astounding. The justification for using the school buildings for such discussions is that they are about social problems which are closely connected with



the withdrawal of children from the schools and with the widest interests of society.

But the value of social centres is not limited to cities. In Texas, where they are being organized in the rural districts, families far separated have been united by the common interests of the schools and community. Men who never gave the schools any attention have suddenly discovered that these institutions are a part of their own life. Libraries are being organized and meetings are held for the discussion of matters of common welfare. All this, of course, reacts upon the schools. They are the "centres" in more than one sense. Here the men and women of the district gather, and the purposes and needs of the school are naturally prominent among the questions for discussion.

There is, however, another side to social centres. Just as pupil-government furnishes an organization through which the plans of the principal may be brought quickly before the leaders of the boys, so these centres give opportunity to the teachers to make their wishes known to the people. The patrons of country schools are widely scattered. Teachers frequently complain of the difficulty of reaching them. Their plans and actions are often misunderstood. Centre meetings are periodical gatherings for talking things over. The leaders of public opinion are there, and men

no less than boys are responsive to the will of the majority.

I am aware that social centres are not always run successfully. But neither are automobiles. Disastrous as the thought may be to our self-esteem, individual incapacity must always be reckoned among the possible causes of failure. One is so prone to test the worth of a plan by one's own power to carry it through successfully, that the writer ventures to illustrate again what was said with reference to pupil-government. All who trust themselves to my skill in driving automobiles may fracture their skulls on telegraph-poles. Yet this does not prove that an automobile cannot be kept in the road. Instead of giving up riding, the sensible procedure would be to put a man in charge who knows how to run the machine. The writer has carefully investigated social-centre failures, and so far as he has been able to learn of them, in every case the cause was bad management. A man was at the steering gear who did not understand his business. A popular plan among school officials is to put a teacher in charge. Many superintendents, with the same fatuity that prevents them from welcoming the assistance of outside experts in school matters, insist on controlling the "centres." So they secure the appointment of one of their subordinates

without any reference to his qualifications, and when he runs the machine into the fence they boldly proclaim that it will not work.

There is a peculiar disease known as *arrogantia pedagogica*, which must be of bacteriological origin since you are affected by the microbe every time you talk with a certain type of pedagogue. He lays down the law to you just as he does to the children in his school-room. His dictum requires no proof and tolerates no discussion. This is the ailment that often incapacitates teachers for the work of which we have been speaking. They cannot avoid treating the members of the "centre" as their pupils and they expect the same sort of results as are demanded in the school. When teachers are fatigued, this microbe is especially active and shows the effects of its inroads in various ways. The mental perspective of the school-master is distorted. An unusually successful principal has discovered that "the teachers' impression of social conditions is apt to be warped if obtained as a result of visits made to the children's homes after a day's work." This mental bluntness endangers the success of any evening work which requires tact, as do social centres.

Unquestionably, principals and teachers should be active members of the centres, and some of

them, through the training thus received, would develop the power of leaders. Teachers need regeneration if they are to accomplish the larger work which is now demanded of the schools. The common saying that they have peculiar marks which make them easily distinguishable in a group is the popular way of referring to the pathological mental condition of which we have been speaking. And the human contact in these centres with the parents of their pupils is the best remedy for their affliction.

We have been considering how the people in a community may be brought to the school. It is equally important to take the school to them. Our problem must not be forgotten. Let us examine it from another point of view. It is impossible for the great mass of the people to have aspirations beyond making a living. Under present social conditions their poverty compels them to rid themselves as quickly as possible of the expense of supporting their children. They went out to work at fourteen. There is no way for many of them to rescue their children from the necessity of doing the same thing even if they could see the value of it. They do not know that unskilled labor is at a continually increasing disadvantage and that boys under sixteen are not wanted as apprentices in skilled work. This is

something that they must be taught. The education of parents is necessary if we are to hold the boys in the school. Of course this education is very different from that of their children. It is not so much the information given in books that is needed as enough knowledge of industrial conditions to realize that a better education is required in workmen to-day than when they were young. There are comparatively few parents who are not anxious to give their children the best start in life that they can. They simply do not know how to do it. And it is the business of the school to help them obtain this information.

But, after ignorance of the worth of education has been changed into appreciation of its value, there remains another social problem which must be reckoned with, and that is poverty. The parents of six hundred and twelve children were questioned by representatives of the United States Commissioner of Labor regarding their financial ability to send their children to school. Forty-one per cent of these parents said that they were willing to have their children continue but were unable to do so, and sixteen per cent were both unable and unwilling.<sup>1</sup> Assuming that families are able to maintain their children in school when there is a weekly income of two dollars and over

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 98.

per capita, after subtracting expenses for rent, sickness, and death, and deducting the earnings of the children, the report still shows that the incomes of forty per cent of five hundred and seventy-three families, whose wages were ascertained, were too meagre to permit the luxury of giving their children a grammar-school education.<sup>1</sup> The significance of these figures becomes more striking when it is observed that none of the families investigated lived in large cities.

The Massachusetts commission in its investigation found that over forty-eight per cent of five thousand four hundred and fifty-nine children left school because their parents were unable to support them.<sup>2</sup>

Further information on this subject is given in the report of the New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor.<sup>3</sup> Eleven thousand families applied to the association for aid during the year. At a very conservative estimate these families represent thirty thousand children. Intemperance was found to be a comparatively rare cause of poverty. Sickness, unemployment, widowhood, and under-pay were the chief causes. Of fifteen hundred families especially studied, the association found sickness to be the cause of nearly

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 104.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 86.

<sup>3</sup> Sixty-eighth annual report, 1911-12.

fifty per cent of the poverty, and unemployment the cause of twenty-five per cent. "Intemperance appeared to account for less than two per cent of dependency in these families."

The figures which we have quoted, startling as they are, portray only a part of the situation. Those who applied for aid were wholly "down and out." There are many other families whose income barely enables them to keep from being submerged. They must have the scanty wages which their children earn, and society pays the penalty for its neglect.

The menace of poverty to good citizenship has attracted the attention of the thoughtful. Illinois recently passed a law providing pensions for widows with children, the sum received to increase with each child. Lloyd-George's plan for insuring against sickness and unemployment also serves to protect society from immediate disaster to its members.

If the schools take the position in the community which we are advocating, they can ascertain the causes of truancy and withdrawal and present the facts with such convincing arguments that public-spirited men and women will revolt against conditions which inevitably doom so many future citizens to unmerited ignorance and squalor. But instead of this the truant officer is sent to the homes.

Belief in educational obligations beyond mere instruction set the principal of School 4, in the Bronx, to thinking. "One of the serious defects from which we suffer in our educational systems is the absence of the parents in the educational process," was the way it came to him. To be sure, there are parents' associations which meet occasionally in the school buildings. There is one in connection with School 4. But they do not meet the situation. The principal saw this and so he decided to try a school "visitor." As there was no money available for the purpose, he used a part of his own salary. The "visitor" became acquainted with the families of the children so that she might deal with them on the basis of friendship. The fact that she was not a member of the teaching staff gave the parents a different feeling toward her. She also, for the same reason, could take a different attitude toward them. Their children had not been on her nerves all day.

The results of this experiment suggest various ways of extending the influence of the school. The interest of the community in this particular school has greatly increased. Families move about within the district, but will not leave it because they wish to remain a part of the school group. The parents of the neighborhood have grown more



conscious of their share in the physical and mental development of their children, and the teachers have gained an insight into social conditions which has greatly strengthened the work of the school. Many times the "visitor" has been able to advise parents regarding matters which concern the health and future success of their children. Whether the boy should remain in school another year is, of course, a frequent query. Incurrible and backward children have been taken to eminent physicians for examination, and in several instances the mental and moral natures of these youngsters have undergone radical transformation.

If school officials say that it is not their business to enter the home and advise parents about their duties to their children, the question may be very properly asked, Whose work is it? The children of these people are among those whom the schools are expected to educate, and they are not doing it because the parents withdraw them as soon as the law permits. If the mature appearance of some boys enables their parents to evade the law by one or two years, they rejoice in having got the better of the school authorities. We may say that the loss is theirs, but it must not be forgotten that we are trying to educate rather than discipline. As a matter of fact, however, the greatest loss is not theirs. Perhaps

neither the parents nor children will ever realize that their lives might have been fuller and richer. The loss falls on the nation. The country pays the penalty in bad government and criminality for this shirking of duty by the schools.

But school officials are not consistent in their division of duties. In several cities the boards of education are conducting evening lectures for adults so that these people may learn a little of what they missed in childhood. Why does this form of community instruction fall within the school's province more than the other? We found in an earlier chapter that the schools have invaded the home in respect to several very personal matters that concern the welfare of the children. And they are justified in so doing because the physical defects to which we refer obstruct educational and mental development. But that is exactly what parental ignorance does in the matter of which we have just been speaking. Whatever interferes with the education of the children of the nation falls within the limits of the duties of the school officials, and they are recalcitrant if they fail to investigate and remedy them.

Boston has recognized this claim in at least one line. The board of education has assumed control of all licensed minors—children between eleven and fourteen years of age. No unlicensed child

under fourteen is allowed to engage in any of the occupations usually open to boys. Regular attendance at school is essential to secure a license. A few years ago the licensed newsboys organized the "Boston Newsboys' Association," with elective captains and lieutenants. This brought about a great improvement in the social sentiment of the boys, just as we have already found happening in pupil-governed schools. At its third annual meeting the association passed a resolution requesting the establishment of a newsboys' court. The character of the resolution prepared by the boys is so suggestive of the opportunities awaiting school officials who are more interested in educating children than in quibbling over the boundaries of their work that we quote it in full:

#### RESOLUTIONS IN FAVOR OF A NEWSBOYS' COURT<sup>1</sup>

*Whereas*, so many newsboys get into court every year for petty violations of the law either through ignorance or thoughtlessness, or failure to realize the consequences, and thereby bring discredit and shame upon themselves, their families, and fellow-newsboys, and whereas the majority of the newsboys who thus get into court are mere children;

*Be it Resolved*, That we, the newsboys of Boston, in mass meeting assembled at Keith's Theatre on Bunker Hill Day, June 17, 1910, do publicly declare in favor of establishing a Newsboys' Court in conformity with the laws of the Commonwealth, which court shall deal with all first offenders against the rules and regulations governing their trade. We invite the co-operation of all public departments concerned.

<sup>1</sup>"Annual Report of the Superintendent," Boston, July, 1910, p.135.

The Board of Education at once granted the request, and the plan as finally put into operation established a trial board consisting of five members. Two of these are adults, annually appointed by the school committee, and three are newsboys, elected annually by the members of the Newsboys' Association from among their captains.

"The cases coming before the trial board are interesting and varied. The complaints range from selling without a badge, or after eight o'clock in the evening, or selling on street-cars, to bad conduct, irregular school attendance, gambling, or smoking. The disposition of these cases varies from reprimands and warnings to probation or suspension of license for a definite period, or complete revocation of license."<sup>1</sup> The "republic" settles disagreements among its members. Through its court and officers it enforces the requirements of the ordinance regarding the work of the boys. The members have made, and in some instances remade, the rules over which they have direct control. In matters beyond their jurisdiction they have secured changes through petition.

One of the significant developments of this newsboys' republic is the interest taken in the work by the parents of the boys. In a number of cases the parents of those brought before the court for

<sup>1</sup> "Annual Report of the School Committee, Boston, 1910," p. 44.

trial have expressed their appreciation of the interest taken in their children. The boys, in turn, have discovered that the schools are for them and not against them. This change in feeling has greatly improved their school-work and attendance. Their new point of view is illustrated, among other ways, in their efforts to advance those members who have reached the age of graduation from the occupation of newsboys. They have even secured scholarships in several higher educational institutions as well as in business schools.

The results gained through the newsboys' republic illustrates again the tremendous strength and versatility of primitive instincts. Put education in opposition to them and endless strife ensues. Under these circumstances the boy is in continual mental resistance to the civilized régime against which his primitive nature rebels. Ally these instincts with you in the educative process, and development acquires the added momentum of racial energy. How great this energy is may be judged from the untiring activity of boys engaged in work which taps these impulses.

This newsboys' republic of twenty-five hundred members is a sample of the social opportunities for extending the influence of the schools. That is our reason for speaking of it at some length.

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It is to be regretted that such means of gaining the support of those who are inclined to be suspicious of the purposes of the school are not more frequently utilized. School officials are still too busy polishing the old machine, so that it may run smoothly and not disturb the community with the noise of friction, to give much attention to winning the boys of the street. Nearly every important duty beyond instruction which the schools have assumed has been undertaken only after long agitation by laymen. Not until the demands of the community have become irresistible have the authorities yielded. This was the case with medical inspection of pupils and with school nurses. The establishment of special schools for backward children was delayed until the popular demand became a menace. Even now few towns have them, and in cities where they are found the number is wholly inadequate to the needs. When the public will no longer brook refusal, reforms are instituted and the next decade is spent in extolling the progress. The few cases in which schools have advanced without popular demand—those, for example, which have established pupil-government—are explained by freedom from the restraint of the superintendent's office. "The best thing that I can say about our superintendent is that he leaves me alone," re-

marked the principal of a really progressive school in a large city. And then he added, "It gives me a chance to do things." Unfortunately, not many superintendents are sufficiently acquainted with the method of progress to know that freedom to initiate is its prerequisite. Most superintendents run a school as they would drive a stage. Teachers must keep abreast and trot at equal pace. The reins are held in the office, and whenever a principal discovers an idea and turns his head toward it, he is pulled back into the road. The method of the "safe" superintendent eliminates intelligence.

Since the schools, instead of leading in educational thought, follow the voice of the public, communities should organize so as to make intelligent demands. School leagues should be established to do for education what civic leagues accomplish for municipal government. Civic leagues attract the intelligent, public-spirited men. Through their committees they investigate municipal problems, and when facts are gathered the campaign for reform is a terror to reactionaries. School leagues would focus the intelligent thought of the community. They could send experts to visit schools in which new plans are being worked out, and through the creation of public sentiment force boards of education to keep schools at a high

degree of efficiency. It may be said that all this can be accomplished through the visits of superintendents, but, paradoxical as it may seem, school officials are not always the best judges of educational progress. Their educational environment has run their thoughts into moulds which can be broken only by the sledge-hammer of public opinion. Besides, if one be found who desires to progress, he is often afraid to trust his principals and teachers with new tools. At times superintendents frankly say that the new plan would be excellent if their teachers were equal to it. The policy of depriving teachers of freedom to initiate tends to produce an artificial selection of incapables who remain in the profession because they do not know what else to do for a living. If public sentiment through school leagues were to force the adoption of better methods in the schools, incapables would be rapidly eliminated and intelligence would be in demand. Young men and women would then enter the work because of the opportunity offered to think, to experiment, and to create.

Besides interesting the community in the schools and forcing progress, these leagues would give opportunity to efficient superintendents to arouse public sentiment for the things that they wish to do. Superintendents are not always to



blame for their failures. The board of education must be reckoned with. The board is an oligarchy nominally responsible to the people, but actually answerable to no one. Its decisions are rarely questioned because no one is sufficiently interested to investigate. The school league could reduce these men to their proper place as representatives of the people. How well the plan may work was shown in a small town in Missouri. The board had transferred an unusually efficient primary teacher to an advanced grade in order to find a place for the daughter of one of its members. The civic league, assuming for the time the functions of a school league, asked the board for a joint meeting. As a result of the conference, at which a few facts and opinions were plainly stated by members of the league, nepotism was nicely aired. The people of this town now know what nepotism means and how it affects the school. No member of the school board will dare to repeat the offence. The people have awakened.

Public interest in the schools can accomplish wonders when it is organized. Had there been a strong school league in Baltimore when the mayor recently forced out an efficient superintendent without waiting for the report of a committee of experts already appointed by the board, the citizens could have resisted the assault upon the

integrity of their schools. To accomplish his purpose the mayor was obliged to remove three members of the board of education, two of them men of eminence in their profession and all splendid representatives of the best citizens. The report of the committee, which consisted of the United States Commissioner of Education and two other well-known educators, afterward sustained the deposed superintendent in all essential matters.<sup>1</sup> The weakness of the people's case lay in lack of organization for the support of good schools.

We have said that the mass of the people have at best only a perfunctory interest in the schools. The immediate cause of this lack of enthusiasm varies with different classes of individuals, but the underlying reason is that vigorous interest cannot exist apart from the consciousness of participation in the management. The people regard the schools as an independent, self-perpetuating institution whose officials have only academic interest in them and faint perception of their requirements. The path leading to any other point of contact with the schools than the visitor's chair is so labyrinthine and so encumbered with official débris of rules, reports, and red tape of the school hierarchy that one must needs be of the leisure

<sup>1</sup> For a full statement of this case see the *Educational Review*, vol. 42, p. 325.

class to have time to trace even an easy question to the end of the trail at the superintendent's desk. The condition is not creditable to human intelligence.

The efficient remedy for this maladjustment between the school and community would be to engage a principal and give him power to introduce such changes as, in his judgment, the conditions in his particular district make advisable. The principal with a free hand could co-operate with the community in many other ways besides those which have been suggested. Through frequent association and conference he could ascertain and remedy the causes of dissatisfaction with the schools. Then if with this freedom he does not succeed in producing an effective educational plant, he should be replaced with another man, until finally one is found who can build up a great public school, the people's college of the community. That is the way in which business enterprises are made efficient. Would an industrial corporation attain success if each subsidiary plant were limited in its activities and inventions by the main office? The manager of each mill knows that he is to be held responsible for results. If he discovers a better way of doing things, the improvement is credited to his reputation. This responsibility draws correspondingly capable men. In the public

schools, on the other hand, if a principal is caught trying to find a more efficient educational process, he is summoned to the office to answer to the charge of doubting the pedagogical wisdom of his ancestors.

But heretics are found even among saints, and "social centres" with school "visitors" are the outgrowth of disbelief in the official creed. They are a protest against the doctrine of the all sufficiency of a system. Frequently they have been tolerated but not approved by the "office." The public demand to which we have already alluded has not yet become threatening enough to be convincing. An organized body of laymen is needed to tempt the conservatives to forsake their ancestral cult and grow modern. That should be the work of the school league. The name is unimportant. A body of intelligent men representative of the racial and social groups in the community is what is wanted.

The diversity of interests which has accompanied the industrial progress of the last twenty-five years has broken community bonds. Immigration has separated cities and country alike into polycentric, if not mutually repellent, groups, each racial division following its own leader in the struggle to maintain its traditional standards of life and education. A unifying purpose is needed. Other-

wise education becomes the foot-ball of contesting factions. This purpose the school, as a strictly non-partisan and non-racial institution, is especially fitted to supply. We have referred briefly to some of the plans which have been tried. The problem is one that admits only of experimental solution, and school officials can no longer ignore their responsibility.

## CHAPTER V

### VAGARIES OF THE SCHOOL

It is strange that backward and defective children should be the first to have their education adapted to their individual requirements. They have their own special schools in which each pupil is studied so that he may be taught in the way best suited to his needs. Meanwhile the bright youngsters are left to glean what education they can from the rules and facts measured out with scrupulous exactness for the capacity of the "average child" who has only pedagogical existence. It is the old story of mental inertia over again in another form. The unusual is what attracts attention. People shudder at the recital of a railroad wreck in which twenty-five human beings lose their lives, yet neglect to remedy evils which claim a yearly tribute of one hundred times as many lives as all the annual railroad disasters of the world.

In the same way the occasional, abnormal child awakens sympathy and stirs to action. But why should bright children be allowed to suffer be-

cause of this freakishness of our minds in standing aghast at the uncommon? Is man so completely enslaved by his primitive nature that he can never turn his mind from the bizarre and examine the commoner things of life? Can he never learn to take an inventory of the stock of social values and estimate the comparative worth of each? I do not mean to decry the duty of society to its unfortunate members, but I insist that bright children should not receive less care than those who are mentally deficient. Yet they do. The schools for abnormal children are superior in every respect to those designed for normal youngsters.

Probably no one would maintain that defective children are a more valuable social asset than bright ones. Yet society acts as though they were. We make elaborate preparations for the education of the blind, the deaf and dumb, and the weak-minded. The classes in these schools are reduced in size to the number which experience has shown can be effectively taught in one group and higher salaries secure better teachers than those engaged to instruct "normal" children.

Lest I may be misunderstood, I repeat that we should continue to do everything that we are doing for the unfortunates who begin life so heavily handicapped. No society can prosper without

the spirit of sympathy. But I ask again, are not the ordinarily intelligent and bright children deserving of equally thoughtful training?

Our educational inconsistency, however, does not end here. There is still another class of children to whom, as we have observed, the public schools are beginning to give a little individual attention. This is the truants and incorrigibles. Their schools are so rare that they would hardly be worth mentioning were it not for the evidence which they give of the almost miraculous mental and social reconstruction of which children are capable. These truant schools are at best only moderately altered to meet the needs of the rebellious lads, but that makes the testimony all the more convincing. A few illustrative cases may be cited.

A nine-year-old boy whose escapades in stealing had won for him the newspaper notoriety of being "a rare specimen of juvenile depravity," while in the hospital school of the University of Pennsylvania read books like Mark Twain's "The Prince and the Pauper" and Andrew Lang's fairy tales. Once he came to the desk and asked for Kipling's "Five Nations." When the attendant told him that it was poetry, and that she did not think he would like it, he answered, "No, I don't want no poetry. I thought it was his-



tory." After he had read aloud a selection from George Eliot's "Mill on the Floss," at the request of the attendant, to determine how well he could read, he asked in a whisper, "May I take the book and finish that?"<sup>1</sup>

Sam, "aged fourteen, was both a truant and incorrigible. For the first few weeks he persisted in leaving his seat, walking about the room, and talking every minute of the time, except when fighting his neighbor. His main purpose seemed to be to be saucy to his teacher and to let everybody know that he had no fear of punishment. He knew absolutely nothing. He could not read and would not consent to try. He would grow ugly if I made the mistake of asking him to do so. I found out that he liked arithmetic because he knew a little more about such work. I gave him twice as many examples as the others, assuring him that if he could read as well as he could cipher he might stand highest in the class. He waited after school every day for private help. I began with the blackboard and a first reader; later, a second reader. In six or seven weeks he had mastered the subject. To-day he will read any book he can lay a hand on. . . . The other day he handed me an old blank book and said: 'Please write in here the things you said about

<sup>1</sup> "Psychological Clinic," vol. IV, p. 237.

me. My father doesn't think it's true that I am a good boy.'" <sup>1</sup>

When the school for truant and incorrigible boys was opened in New York City, "Philip, thirteen years of age, was placed high on the eligible list. . . . He was a chronic truant, and, at the time of his transfer, was a vagrant, not having slept at home for some time. It took two attendance officers and two teachers three weeks to find the boy and bring him into school. He remained about two hours and then ran out, and was gone for another week. Finally he was brought back again, and this time he remained. About four weeks later, during which time he had not played truant once, and in several other ways had shown a desire to do well, he went to the principal's office, where the following conversation took place:

"Philip: 'Say, Miss Jones, there's two fellers on my street what don't go ter school. If I make 'em come, will yer take 'em in?'

"Principal: 'Why don't they go to school?'

"Philip: 'They ain't been in no school in a long while.'

"Principal: 'Where did they go to school?'

"Philip: 'They didn't go ter no public; they

<sup>1</sup> "The Incorrigible Child," by Julia Richman, *Educational Review*, vol. 31, p. 496.

went ter de Brudders'. Say, Miss Jones, won't yer take 'em in if I make 'em come?'

"Principal: 'You can't make them come.'

"Philip: 'Now, never yer mind what I can do. Will yer take 'em in if I make 'em come?'

"Principal: 'I'll take them.'

"And he went off. The next morning he came into Miss Jones's office and literally threw two boys at her, having brought them into the school holding each by the collar. Their home was fully half a mile from the school.

"'Here's them two fellers. Didn't I tell yer I could bring 'em?'

"The two boys upon investigation were found to have been away from school for seven months spending their entire time upon the street."<sup>1</sup> They were at first irregular in attendance, but soon settled down to the same regularity that Philip was following.

If recognition of the individuality of semi-criminal lads with no social position to maintain produces such amazing results, are the individual differences of "normal" children likely to be less responsive to environment? In other words, should not the schools give as good a chance to the boys who have not won social distinction by crime?

<sup>1</sup> Julia Richman, *loc. cit.*, pp. 492-3.

The influence of environment in mind-building has been still further investigated in various junior republics, to some of which reference has already been made. The objection may be raised here that the boys in these republics are under the constant care of the teachers. This, however, is not true of truant classes, which, as we have seen, also offer striking examples. The evidence shows that even in the republics it is not continuous contact with the children so much as the method employed which has worked the change. The teachers in these institutions do not secure their results by direct magisterial intervention in the behavior of their pupils. Those in charge have discovered the way to organize children so that principles of conduct may arise from their own social relations, and they have learned, in addition, that the only justification for the existence of a system of education is to train the individual children who enter it. Public-school officials have missed both of these truths. So inflexible is their system that it would break were it bent to meet the needs of individual children. The thought terrifies many superintendents. Their system is their personal asset, and if it is lost they are bankrupt. The only concession, therefore, which they are willing to make is the truant school. This is regarded as a sort of mind-cure

establishment for the treatment of lads who need to be mentally toned up, so that they may be able to stand the school régime. The possibility of the régime itself being at fault is rarely admitted "officially," though in private conversation one hears all manner of dissatisfaction. After the "cure" of the truant school, a boy is returned to his regular class to make room for another pedagogical invalid, and the same merry round of truancy and incorrigibility is repeated until finally the legal age for withdrawal from school is reached and the lad is turned loose upon society without having received any appreciable influence from the schools which the naïve public have thought were intended to train citizens. "Six-tenths of our children," remarked a principal in one of our large cities, "leave school at the earliest possible opportunity with habits that are vicious and knowledge that is just a step removed from illiteracy."

The republics for criminally inclined children originated in the refusal of these youngsters to be turned in the common pedagogic lathe. As this class is immune to the conventional ideapalsies of people in good standing, the traditional belief in the omniscience of the school-master does not charm them. Consequently these children instinctively fight to preserve their individuality,

unconscious that they are thus avoiding respectable mediocrity.

The revolt of these little social outcasts has made a new educational epoch. Of course, the event has not as yet greatly affected the schools. The twenty years of success, during which the revolt has attained the dignity of a revolution, is too brief a period for the education of all the educators. A few parents, however, whose boys have not engaged in enough crimes to enable them to "pass the examination" popularly thought to be set for entrance to these junior republics, have procured their admission "with conditions," since the fathers felt that their boys should not be deprived of the superior advantages of these institutions merely because they lacked the finer criminal touch. Parents occasionally send their sons to Freeville to prepare them for college so that they may obtain a few ideas along with their "education."

The educational revolt of the more aggressively individualistic lads of whom we have been speaking has brought its reward. Their training was taken out of the hands of professional educators. These forerunners of the new educational Renaissance know that the writers of the past were dealing with very different conditions from those of to-day, and they are not unacquainted with the

knowledge about children which has been gathered in recent years. But more than all else, the founders of these junior republics are convinced that systems of education are designed for children, instead of children being created that elaborate educational systems may be constructed. All this means that they are modern. They look upon the history of education as the starting-point for fresh expeditions of discovery, instead of a place in which to camp for the remainder of their lives. Investigation and experiment, they believe, will change old truths without refuting them; for truth is not crystallized facts. It grows by taking up within itself new knowledge which builds into the fibre of the truth and starts its growth anew, so that finally something different, yet not contradictory, is produced.

But the revolting youths have gained their point at the cost of serious loss to more adaptable children. When the seceders were recognized as belligerents and modern schools were established for them, the pressing necessity for reorganizing our public schools was removed. The well-to-do accept conventional ideas more readily than the socially submerged. Consequently tradition won another victory when the position was tacitly taken that, while admitting a different educational requirement for semi-criminal children,

"normal" lads are best served by a training which has stood the test of time. It is doubtful, however, whether parents will long allow the privilege of individuality to be limited to children of criminal prospects.

But the view that education is more than instruction, that every child has personal characteristics which make him a special problem, and that complete development is possible only when these individual qualities are discovered by the teacher and utilized for growth, has been accepted only in principle even for incorrigibles, for junior republics are still so few that many boys are turned away. Yet most of these applicants are from the class which does not seek any education. This is a commentary on the numerous withdrawals from the public schools as well as on their truancy. But many superintendents are unable to see the connection between successful schools for wayward children and public education. Their imagination cannot stretch so far. The fact that incorrigible boys of the public schools become astonishingly tractable and teachable when placed in a stimulating environment and treated as individuals with personal rights is persistently ignored. And yet, when they had the opportunity, these same superintendents, with their composite method of education, were unable to exert effective influence on this type of boy.



The refusal of so many school officials to accept the larger meaning of the achievements of truant schools and junior republics is partly due to the difficulties which the admission would cause them. If individual differences of sufficient importance to warrant personal attention were acknowledged to be common among children, a radical reconstruction of the school system would logically follow. This reconstruction is what most superintendents wish to avoid. It would create an exceedingly embarrassing situation for them because they have nothing else to offer. All their training has been along traditional lines. The old classification into good and bad children makes no damaging admissions. It is therefore "safe." The "good" are those who do not display their ennui while the things which they learned in ten minutes the week before are being repeated each day in conformity with the pedagogic slogan, "drill," or those who feign interest while they flounder, if not so bright, in an underbrush of ideas through which they see no light.

Slow thinkers must hurry along in the trail of the phantom "average," to find at the end of the year that they have only reached the camp of the retarded. The appalling injury inflicted upon the children of the nation by the refusal of these superintendents to give the youngsters a fighting chance is seen when the children have oppor-

tunity to progress, each according to his own ability.

In the Santa Barbara schools, as Caroline F. Burk<sup>1</sup> has shown, the so-called normal children, *i. e.*, those who did the usually required year's work, were less than half of all the pupils. Under a flexible promotion system 281 finished less than the year's work and 185 exceeded it. As all of the pupils did as much as their ability and surrounding conditions permitted, the conclusion seems inevitable that if the "'normal' children had been permitted to set the pace for all, serious harm would have been done to the 466, or more than half of those in the schools."

The same striking difference in the capacity of children has been shown in the Baltimore schools under former Superintendent Van Sickle:<sup>2</sup>

"The plan in brief is to allow pupils who have done strong work in the sixth grade, with the approval of their parents, to take up extra studies of high-school grade while doing the regular work of the seventh and eighth grades of the elementary school. . . . Pupils who take this work are transferred to a convenient centre in which enough pupils may be gathered together to allow the instruction to be organized on the departmental

<sup>1</sup> *Educational Review*, March, 1900.

<sup>2</sup> "Provision for Gifted Children in Public Schools," by J. H. Van Sickle, *Elementary School Teacher*, vol. 10, p. 357.

plan." Of the 236 preparatory-school pupils who graduated up to June, 1910, "41 were in the high school proper but two years; 120 were in the high school three years, and 75, four years. Among the latter were 57 who spent but one year—the eighth—in a preparatory centre."

Van Denburg's investigation<sup>1</sup> of the New York City high schools shows that only 16 of a group of 129 boys and 19 girls out of 221, all of whom entered at about fourteen years of age, finished on time.

The effect of mass-education is seen in the report of Leonard Ayres. In thirty-one cities, taken as a whole, "33.7 per cent of the children, or a trifle more than one-third, are above normal age for their grades."<sup>2</sup> The result of this retardation is that "many retarded pupils, finding themselves at the end of the compulsory-attendance period one or more grades below the final one, leave school without completing the elementary course."<sup>3</sup>

The question, however, involves much more than mere promotion. The results of an investigation of retardation in three Chicago schools "indicate that what we have been calling retardation is not retardation but a course of study

<sup>1</sup> "Elimination of Students in Public Secondary Schools," p. 92.

<sup>2</sup> "Laggards in Our Schools," p. 48.

<sup>3</sup> Leonard Ayres, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

unsuited to the powers of the children who pursue it.”<sup>1</sup>

The fate of the rapid thinkers is evidently not less tragic than that of the slow. At the age when their minds are most alert, when they are keen for the conquest of new worlds of knowledge, they are chained to the same old mythical “average” that drags along their stumbling comrades who are in the rear. “We do not know how to use the bright boy’s time,” writes a grammar-school principal. Five long months are spent by pupils in covering work which they could better do in one, and all because a committee of adults has decided that certain topics deserve the assigned amount of time. Meanwhile the enthusiasm which was kindled at the start gives way to hatred for the work. The brighter children learn the schoolish art of adapting their gait to the pace of the slow. They would violate the fundamental law of their organism if they did not, for adaptation to surrounding conditions is the law of life. So their nervous system acquires the habit of slow response. Why should they think more quickly than the quality of the class requires? “The school is oblivious of individual characteristics,” said a principal of wide experi-

<sup>1</sup> “Retardation Statistics of Three Chicago Schools,” by Clara Schmitt, *Elementary School Teacher*, vol. 10, p. 492.

ence. Then, after a moment's thought, he added: "We have all noticed how brightness and intelligence begin to wear out and to be replaced by indifference and sluggishness."

Superintendents, generally, with true pedagogic fatuity have thought to solve the problem by one of their usual partial concessions. They have introduced half-yearly promotions.<sup>1</sup> "Now, if children do not advance as rapidly as their ability warrants," they tell us, "the school is not to blame." But this only lengthens the rope with which bright children are mentally hobbled. Indeed, in some instances this half-yearly promotion rule contains a joker in the requirement that children to avail themselves of the opportunity must be prepared for promotion in all their studies. In such cases retardation in one subject forces a child to repeat with dreary monotony studies in which he already excels. A better plan for making children hate study and reading could hardly be invented. The following instance is only one of many that could be related:

A boy in one of our large towns had been unable to attend school because of the necessity of financing some of the family's bills from his small earnings. He was so bright and studious that he

<sup>1</sup> In a very few schools this plan is extended still further by means of intervening class divisions. This lessens the gap which pupils must jump.

had taught himself the simple processes of arithmetic. He had also made good progress alone in learning to read. At twelve years of age he could see his way through two years of school, and he at once seized the opportunity, full of enthusiasm. When the writer learned of the boy, it was found that he had already squandered in the second grade a goodly part of the precious time which he had earned for study. The reason given by the principal was that he was deficient in spelling and language work. Yet the lad's worth was proven not alone by the progress which he had made through his own efforts before entering school, but also by an amazing knowledge of the cotton industry. In reply to the expressions of astonishment at his information, this twelve-year-old said: "Yes, I know all about everything that they do in a cotton factory, but I didn't work there very long. I've farmed most of my life." *The injustice of such cases will never be righted until children are allowed to advance in each separate subject as fast as their ability permits.*

But we have been considering only the more evident individual differences of rapid and slow thinking. The subtler personality hidden in the impulses, feelings, preferences, prejudices, and latent powers of children is not touched by ease of promotion.

The reduction of individual differences to a fairly scientific basis is recent. It has been, of course, always obvious that members of the same family may differ widely, but these variations, so far as they have received any attention, have usually been ascribed to the presence or absence of perseverance or of moral purpose. If a boy annoyed his teacher instead of studying, it was because he was afflicted with rather more than his share of original sin. Of course our forefathers did not put it in just this way. The studious child was not analyzed. He did not need it. His submission was accepted as a pleasant fact. Wayward children then as now occupied the greater part of the teacher's thought. There was, however, only one way of dealing with them and that was with stern discipline. If this did not bring reformation it was because Satan had secured too firm a grip. Now that the devil is dead we have learned that badness is often a boy's way of showing that he is physiologically incapable of studying in the manner required by his teacher.

A child, for example, may be incapable of thinking in visual terms. His memory images are of things heard, not seen. It is not unwillingness to learn in some other way. He is so made that he cannot. His whole nature rebels at doing the required visual thinking. What shall he do? If he

were a psychologist he might experiment with his classmates to learn whether he were "peculiar," whether his thoughts were made of different stuff from theirs. He could then petition the superintendent for a method of instruction suited to his individuality. But, since he is just a boy, he follows a more primitive method of obtaining redress. He revolts, and when his teacher chides him for inattention to the visual images which seem so apt he sulks. Then he is kept after close of school and given another assortment of visual ideas until, in sheer despair, his teacher dismisses him without having taught anything more lasting than hatred for study. But ignorance of such individual differences as these is only a part of the indictment. Many teachers cannot distinguish intelligence from stupidity.

A few years ago the writer studied the lives of eminent men and women to learn, if possible, to what extent their teachers had discovered their ability. Fifty were easily found who were thought to be stupid by their teachers.<sup>1</sup> The opinion then ventured, that the school test of ability is valueless because it employs an artificial standard to which all children must conform, has since been verified by an investigation conducted under the direction of the United States Commissioner of

<sup>1</sup> "Mind in the Making," chap. I, by Edgar James Swift.



Labor.<sup>1</sup> Fortunately, as an answer to those who think that men of eminence are in a class by themselves and that general conclusions cannot be drawn from their boyhood, the investigation of which we are now speaking dealt with those whose biographies will probably never be written.

One hundred and eighty children were taken at random and their teachers' estimates of their mental ability were compared with the subsequent judgment of their employers. The result is shown in the following table:

CAPACITY OF CHILDREN	TEACHERS' ESTIMATES		EMPLOYERS' ESTIMATES	
	NUMBER	PER CENT	NUMBER	PER CENT
Bright.....	47	26.1	89	49.4
Average .....	86	47.8	77	42.8
Dull .....	47	26.1	14	7.8
Total reported	180	100.0	180	100.0

"It will be seen that the employers considered nearly half of these children bright, while the teachers put only a trifle over one-fourth of them in this group, and the employers classed only fourteen as dull, against forty-seven whom the teachers so described." Evidently the educational machine needs overhauling.

<sup>1</sup> "Report on Conditions of Woman and Child Wage-earners in the United States," vol. VII, p. 122.

If a boy becomes conspicuous for incorrigibility, or if he is hopelessly weak-minded, he at least wins the distinction of being a "special case." But if he is only intelligent without any special aptitude for crime, he is denied the privilege of individuality. He must fit into the composite mind-transformer as best he can. The supposition is, of course, that his very normality makes it easier for him to go through the pedagogical contortions. "It is awfully tiresome getting ready to be a man," sighed a boy of ten not long ago. "I guess I wasn't born right because my way is always wrong. I asked teacher yesterday if I couldn't make the geography lesson out-of-doors with water. It was about rivers, you know; but she said I must study the book. I told her I had studied it. Then she said the other fellows would want to go if I did, so I couldn't. It's funny how teachers always want fellows to do the same thing when they are made different."

This lad's intuition caused him to feel the misfit which he could not analyze. Children with inherited tendencies to motor reactions are put under the same scholastic regimen as those whose racial heritage draws them more easily to their books. Periods in ontogenetic development have no rights that conflict with the course of study. The curriculum is sacred. It has been so long an

established fact that we have forgotten the reason for its existence. Periods in the growth of children received scant courtesy when it was made. Harmony in the structure of the document was the first consideration, and the relation of the various subjects of study to one another was the guiding principle. Thus formal grammar must come early so as to get it out of the way of other languages. Besides, belief in the need of grammar as a prerequisite for the enjoyment of literature has long been a pedagogical obsession. So it is placed at an early age when children are mentally least suited to it. In history the possibility of separating the topics so that adventurous periods may be studied when children thirst for action has never been seriously considered. That would disturb the unity of the educational scheme.

Ask for the reason of the position in the curriculum of any subject and the same fact is evident. Nascent periods of development had no part in it. Tradition rules. When a display of progress requires the introduction of new studies, the stages of mental growth are again left out of account. Logical sequence of subjects is the superficial guide; but since, in this case, sequence depends upon the inherited method of treatment, tradition remains the controlling force. If one were to judge from the school schedule, the subjects

of study must have been produced in unalterable succession immediately after the division of the land from the waters, and then children created to fit them. The individual differences, as well as developmental changes, in children are wholly ignored. The result is that pupils leave school as soon as they can. If forced by their parents to remain, their chief benefit comes from association with their fellows and from learning the art of appearing wise with little knowledge. "If we persist in our inexcusable failure to provide such variations during the last years of our so-called elementary course, when individual differences appear with unmistakable and increasing force, we may expect boys and girls to continue as they now do to seek in the more tolerable occupations of the street, factory, shop, office, and mercantile house the kind of interests for which they feel an instinctive though vaguely defined need."<sup>1</sup>

Forced conformity to a system of education inherited from a time when individual differences and developmental changes had not been investigated, and when the power of racial instincts as an educational force was not understood, is the fate of children whose minds are not cut by the pattern in the superintendent's office. But no

<sup>1</sup>"Getting Our Bearings on Industrial Education," by Jesse D. Burk, *Elementary School Teacher*, vol. 9, pp. 450-1.

minds are made on that plan, since the pedagogical tailors did not think of individual children. Their purpose was to supply an education which would be accepted by the greatest number of customers. So they made a composite pattern which should fit those of a certain age, *provided they were like the pattern*. But, unlike venders of ready-made clothing, they refuse to alter their goods to meet the needs of patrons, for there is an ancient dogma that teachers may compel children to take the education offered. It dates from a period when educational tailors were learning their trade, and so too much could not be expected of them. At that time also children were thought to be made according to a common plan. The original sketch of the plan was all right, but the devil took a hand in it before things were finished, and that has made a lot of trouble for children even to the present day. For teachers have been slow to yield the advantage which the devil-idea gives them. They use it to strengthen the old tradition, giving them absolute educational authority, which has been losing some of its mystic power in recent years. Of course they employ a more euphonious word to-day. Incurable sounds better, but it means the same thing. And that is what they now call boys who refuse to receive an education which does not fit them.

The reasons for contentment with a generalized education which were valid in the days of our forefathers are no longer sufficient. We live in a period of investigation and experimentation. We can no longer respect theoretical conclusions about questions which are amenable to the test of experiment. Interminable discussions of such subjects, with a continuous performance of metaphysical decisions and reversals of these decisions, were pardonable during the Middle Ages, but they are pathetic to-day. Yet this is the method of many public-school superintendents. The experimental method in the solution of educational problems is not in favor with the National Education Association. Speakers frequently appeal to experiments, but the reports of the association's committees on courses of study and methods have the dogmatic certainty of the proceedings of mediæval church councils.

The attitude of the National Association toward educational experiments and the office-chair method of settling questions which is followed by its committees have given many inefficient superintendents ground for believing that they are modern. The stimulus to investigate and to progress which should be given by the highest educational body in the country is wholly lacking. The advice which the association offers is based on

a generalized human nature which every psychologist knows is often only a schematic view of the manner in which man acts and reacts. The so-called general psychology is coming more and more to be separated into individual psychology and the psychology of groups of individuals. We know now that the individual acts very differently according to the group in which he happens to find himself, and we have learned that different persons do not always react in the same way to the same stimulus or conditions. This is especially significant in education because children are being trained to action and behavior. For this reason it is supremely important that the individual differences of pupils be studied and made the basis of the discipline and education which each is to receive. And it is of no less importance for "normal" and bright children than for defectives. Retardation, as has already been said, is often caused by the failure to take the personal psychology of the child into account.

The assumption has always been made that bright children can take care of themselves. Some geniuses have succeeded in doing this, but they have done it by ignoring their teachers and their work. They have found for themselves the environment required for their mental growth. If this is regarded as the method of education peculiarly

adapted to geniuses, it is not very complimentary to the schools, since it reduces education to the chance opportunities which fortune may throw in one's way. Would the world have had Michael Angelo if he had not been born in a town where, during days of truancy, he could loiter in the studios of sculptors? The schools are educational institutions. At least that is the popular supposition. But education consists in helping the talents of children to emerge so that the youths may become conscious of them. Yet that is the thing which few teachers do. The excuse is lack of time, and under the regulation of the system they are right, because modern education has never taken individual aptitude into account in the reckoning of school duties.

It may be said that superior talent will surely reveal itself. But we have already seen that, in the lower animals, instincts as firmly established as the requirements of the species for survival can fix them, do not appear without appropriate stimulation from the environment. Has talent in human beings any stronger incentive to call it forth? We must not forget that in man opposing stimuli are always present. Opportunity to enter a trade or profession with what seems to be unusually favorable prospects, and the desire to quickly become self-supporting, are cases in point.



As a matter of fact, talent, under conditions of modern life, is exceedingly delicate and must be tenderly handled, else it will die at birth. Investigations mentioned in an earlier chapter have shown a striking connection between genius on the one hand and time and place on the other, and the dearth of great productions to-day in lines which do not promise good financial returns is a matter of general comment. Whatever may be true of the inheritance of talent, its creative realization, and hence its social value, depends upon environment.

The responsibility of the schools here is evident. They have the children from the age when ability is largely undifferentiated to the time when talent should manifest itself if the environment offers suitable stimulation. But the inexcusable fact, as we have seen, is that teachers rarely discover either ordinary intelligence or unusual talent. They are so occupied with hearing lessons that they fail to educate. Often, indeed, the very evidence of ability is the chief source of annoyance. A boy of fourteen worked a year to earn the money with which to buy chemicals and apparatus for a laboratory of his own. It meant many deprivations. He refused invitations involving expense that he might lay aside the money which he earned by selling papers and tending furnaces. At last his

savings-bank account showed twenty-five dollars to his credit. He purchased the outfit and arranged a little laboratory in his sleeping-room, where he worked evenings while his friends were on the street and visiting moving-picture shows. One day during recess, when the science teacher was out of town, he went to the chemical laboratory of the school to repeat an experiment which did not "work" the preceding evening at his home. He thought that he could finish it before the close of recess. At any rate he would surely hear the bell. But in his absorption in the work, a strange fact from the pedagogical point of view, time went faster than he expected, and when at last the experiment was successfully done he found that it was twenty minutes past the ringing of the bell, and he had not heard it. At the close of school the teacher told him to remain. When the others had left he explained his tardiness, and then his punishment was doubled because he was not only late but had entered the laboratory without permission. And his sin was enthusiasm for study beyond the class prescription!

It is not considered good form for children to mature according to their own individuality. Committees have worked it all out and they know just how children should develop. Any deviation from their plans is an educational mon-

strosity which must be promptly suppressed, lest the belief in the right to grow through one's own powers spread and depreciate the value of the miscellaneous collection of antique pedagogical ideas. Naturally the superintendents of whom we have been speaking do not wish to lose their stock in trade, because it is always hard to make a new start in life. Besides, if the claim of one child to his own personal sort of development were allowed, others might insist upon the same privilege. This would create a bad precedent, and a precedent is something to be avoided. It is a dangerous thing. Think what chaos this would cause in a school of two thousand children! That would mean two thousand youngsters each with his own personality, and every one claiming the right to grow in his own way. What would become of the system which has been carefully built up and improved until it can turn out each year a limitless number of fac-similes?

The test of efficiency is the product, and the condemnatory fact about our public-school system is its failure to obtain results. The majority of children escape it from day to day if they can, and they anticipate with keenest joy the time when they may legally leave it forever. The few teachers who have played an important part in shaping the careers of eminent men have been

those who broke away from traditional methods. They have thought of education as mental development rather than as the acquisition of a given stint of information, and in their training they have taken thought of the personal traits of their pupils. That is not so easy to-day, because overseers are often employed to prevent it. These overseers are given a less opprobrious title, but it comes to the same thing. They are called supervisors. Their purpose is to see that the teachers obey the rules regarding the course of study and the method of presentation. In some instances there are also supervisors of supervisors who in turn must draw their intellectual nourishment from assistant superintendents, and these again drink at the fountain of method in the superintendent's sanctuary. It is doubtful if a more marvellous confusion could be devised. No one below the pedagogical divinity has any authority. The teacher is helpless. And he is always in fear of the penalty of transgression.

Under these conditions, if a teacher is convinced that departure from the rules would benefit some of his pupils he presents the request to his principal. The principal then asks the assistant superintendent, the assistant superintendent asks the superintendent, and the superintendent, if, as is often the case, he wishes to escape respon-

sibility, asks the board of education, and the board refers it to a committee. These are all over and above the supervisors to whom we just referred. This is the educational conduit when the system is not of the most approved model. The latest improvements, at least in our largest city, have given us a few notable additions, such as assistant principals, district superintendents, and associate superintendents. When the request of which we were speaking has passed through the labyrinthine channel it reaches its destination so wonderfully improved that one is lost in admiration at the marvellous reconstructive power of the system. It evolves the simplest question into a terrifying spectre. "We cannot recognize our own question when it comes back to us tagged with the answer," remarked a teacher. When the answer is received the personality of the referee is often hidden in that most diplomatic of all pronouns, "it." "It has been decided" is the way the answer often runs. Surely no better system for shirking responsibility could have been invented. Naturally, teachers soon cease to make requests, and the children are left to get along as best they may.

The pathetic side of all this is that these questions concern the welfare of *live* children for whose growth and development they are of vital impor-

tance. Yet, in city and country alike, such questions are decided by men who have no adequate knowledge of the children in behalf of whom they are asked. The teacher who works with them every day is the only one who has that knowledge, and he has no authority to act. Indeed, only in rare instances does he have opportunity to present his case, since it is a part of the ethics of "the system" that communications take the prescribed course which, though varying in length with the size of the town, is always long enough to diffuse and evaporate responsibility. Cases of supreme importance to the life of boys and girls are decided as though they were questions of financial investment to be settled by a committee of directors with reference solely to their benefit to the corporation. That is, in fact, the basis of decision because the paramount preliminary question always is, "If we grant this, will it cause us trouble?" Superintendents, in small and large towns alike, rarely assume authority because, if trouble arises, they wish to shield themselves behind the impersonal board of education.

The centralization of the privilege of thinking has produced an educational machine of tiresome uniformity. As the number of traditional authorities who furnish ideas is limited, a depressing sameness extends throughout the country. The

poorer schools are not distinguished from the better so much by a different method as by a worse handling of the same method.

Conformity to official methods has been made in many places the test of teaching efficiency, and the teachers who secure promotion are those who adapt themselves most successfully to the traditional ideas of their school system. Outlines of opinions of educational reformers are taught as the history of education. Moreover, the exact period in antiquity of the author of each present-day book on methods can be determined from the reformer whom he has disinterred for his educational model. If the results of this embalmed pedagogy are not good, and there are those who say that they are not, the blame is put upon the raw material delivered to the schools to be worked up into an intelligent, social product. This is a safe position to take, because no one can prove that a boy who leaves school with hatred for study, and without any strong purpose in life, did not inherit these undesirable qualities from some aberrant ancestor. As we all have such forbears, one cannot help admiring the clever strategy shown in the selection of such an impregnable position. To be sure, the intrenchments of these schoolmen, as we have seen, are just now being undermined by republics for criminally inclined boys,

but as no oligarchy has ever abandoned a position before its defences were blown up by public opinion, it is too soon to expect a realignment of forces.

One of the causes of this conservatism of superintendents is their fear of reprisals from their constituency. Progressively inclined men admit this. "Few of us can hope to make a national reputation," remarked one not long ago, "and our only hope of being called to a larger school with a higher salary is to keep one position until another is obtained. This means that we must not antagonize the public by introducing unpopular innovations." This diagnosis is fairly correct. Self-preservation requires one to hold one's position. The educational welfare of the children, therefore, is a secondary matter. At whatever cost to them the public must be kept contented. This produces an artificial selection of mediocre men, since those of quality refuse to adapt themselves to such stultifying conditions. As officials selected in this way are not of the creative sort, most of those who survive do so by adopting traditional doctrines. No effective opposition to a superintendent can arise so long as he walks circumspectly in the paths which his professional ancestors have trodden. On the other hand, the attitude of the public toward innovations is un-



certain. Pestalozzi and Herbart cannot be quoted in support of them. The old men of the tribal community, in whom wisdom rests, are sure to disapprove. It seems wise, therefore, to follow established methods. So the vicious circle repeats itself.

Naturally, timid superintendents, who always keep their fingers on the public pulse so as immediately to detect a rise of temperature, do not wish to have constructive principals under them. Subordinates with ideas are a menace. If their innovations do not create trouble, they may still be startling enough to make the people take notice, and such superintendents do not wish the public gaze of approval to be turned from their office. They must be the acknowledged source of all improvements. Therefore they desire imitators in their system. Only strong independent men dare to gather original thinkers around them.

The same disastrous effect of this artificial selection extends down through the system and draws to the schools a body of teachers who must earn their living and who do not know what else to do. Since it is generally known that teachers are not allowed to carry out their own constructive ideas the capable men and women who are not merely seeking a respectable job tend to enter other lines of work. One bit of evidence is

the deplorable situation which has recently been discovered in Portland, Maine. The public library of that city issues teachers' cards which enable the holder to draw five non-fiction books at one time. At the time of the last published report only twenty-five<sup>1</sup> of these cards had been issued to public-school teachers, and there are two hundred and ninety-five teachers in the schools. If this is indicative of the proportion of non-fiction readers among the public-school teachers of the country, and there is no reason to suppose Portland to be exceptional, how can they be expected to develop the children who come under them? The first requirement in one who is to teach others to think is that he himself be a thinker, and it seems evident that public-school teachers do not satisfy the test. But, as we have seen, the selective process which prevails in most schools turns away thinkers.

Complete development means specialized growth. Every child is a complex of undifferentiated strength and weakness. The teacher is the analyst who is to separate the ingredients which make up the individual boys and girls, and, by determining the significance of each component factor,

<sup>1</sup> "Annual Report, 1910." The report gives thirty-one teachers' cards, but the writer has learned that six of these were taken by teachers in a private school.

to utilize all the forces that make for growth. Mass-education which requires each child to conform to a stereotyped system should be replaced by a flexible plan of education that affords opportunity for the play of mental forces. It is not reasonable to expect unlike children to react with equal benefit to the same demands. Each one requires his own special sort of mental stimulation. Though the reorganization of the curriculum is important, the fundamental educational need is flexibility in method. Education should be adapted to varying personalities instead of requiring each child to adapt himself to a fixed plan of growth. Diversity of ability is required in the evolution of human society. This is one of the differences between man and the lower animals. Among the latter the demands of survival forbid marked variation. Animals are obliged to conform to the conditions set by nature, and the examinations which they must pass are always made out on the same plan. Unusual ability which varies from the type has no place here. Now, curiously enough, the schools have adopted the same plan, and stamp with disapproval all departures from their design. A certain standard of efficiency is assumed, and those who do not conform receive low marks. That is what nature does in her school, only she is so irritated that

she kills those who fail. The teacher, on the other hand, only retards his pupils in their school progress and, incidentally, in their mental growth.

Reorganization of our educational system to meet the demands of individual variation is the modern educational problem. But school systems have become such a fascinating subject of study that the atomic individuals for whom the systems were devised have been forgotten; the enlargement and perpetuation of the organization is more important than the welfare of the children. An eminent German educator who visited our country not long ago, when asked his opinion of our schools, replied, with dry humor, that the thing which impressed him most was their similarity. But this similarity is such as we have seen in the animal method.

The directors of our educational systems should grasp the fact that new conditions require corresponding changes in education. In the earlier history of our country the ignorance of some teachers and the lack of time of others forced children to do a little thinking. Since, through force of circumstances, the boys and girls of that period were left to their own devices, they naturally did their thinking in their own way. They were blessed with absence of system. The schools did not then run on schedule time, with the text-book

page which must be reached on a certain day marked in the plan. Now a prescribed distance is run each day in order not to "lose time." The result of the time-table method is that much of the work is done for the pupils by the teacher. The book is to be covered and the class must be kept together. So there is no other way than for the teacher to do the work and then to show the children how he did it. And so great is the joy of the teacher in his splendid exposition that he is sure they all understand it. Yet one of the educational maxims is that we learn by doing, and not by hearing or seeing. Of course, this rapidity of transportation leaves some of the pupils scattered along the right of way, but not so many as the speed would warrant, since many are kept from falling off by the teacher because his teaching-efficiency is graded in part by the number who go through to the end of the journey.

It is a trite statement that education does not consist in the number of pages gone over, yet it seems necessary to make it. Every child has his own way of approaching a subject of study, and his mental development requires that his personality be reckoned with. His way may not always be the best, but whatever improvement is made must come through and not against his own line of approach. Children with keen love for science

or literature have been made to hate the work by the formalism of the school. It is time to start a crusade against the vending of cold-storage pedagogy.

## CHAPTER VI

### FALLACIES IN MORAL TRAINING

OUR New England forefathers had the right idea regarding the relation of mental and moral training in the schools when they inserted in the "New England Primer":

"Good children must  
Fear God all day,  
Parents obey,  
No false things say,  
By no sin stay,  
Love Christ alway,  
In secret pray,  
Mind little play,  
Make no delay  
In doing good."

Evidently our ancestors were convinced that the mental and moral elements in education should not be separated; and when they put into the same primer under F, so that the infant in learning his letters could not miss it, "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction shall drive it from him," they associated discipline with mental and moral training,

and the education of the child was complete. The compilers of this wonderful little "New England Primer" were certainly right in their determination to educate the whole child instead of dividing him up into sections, with a distinct *materia medica* for each part.

The unity of mind has always been difficult to comprehend. Early modern psychology divided the soul into faculties each of which was supposed to be trained separately and specifically. This error still prevails in popular psychologies designed more for pedagogic effect than for truthful statement of fact.

This compartment idea of the mind has been the cause of fallacies which have been attended with unfortunate results in elementary and secondary education. The belief in a faculty of memory has led to an exaggerated estimation of the value of unrelated facts and information which, in their chaotic state, serve as a nervous irritant that would seriously obstruct mental activity were they not sloughed off by the mind in the healing process. Nature has endowed boys with a beneficent indifference to indigestible mental fodder, just as we are told she has taught birds to reject poisonous caterpillars. It seems to be her way of protecting her offspring from rapid destruction. The difference is that children may be compelled to



take the food offered by their teachers, and for this reason they are likely to suffer from mental gastritis.

But still more disastrous, perhaps, has been the separation of the mental from the moral in development. The schools have limited themselves to intellectual instruction while moral training has been relegated to the home and to such other influences as parents may select. Unfortunately, the home does not always perform the duty which has been assigned to it. A large proportion of juvenile delinquents come from homes which do not function. One-half of the delinquents and nearly three-fourths of the neglected children in charge of the juvenile court of Saint Louis come from homes in which the parents are not living together.<sup>1</sup> Considerably more than fifty per cent of those entering the Indiana Boys' School have lost one or both parents by separation or death, and one or both parents of half the boys in the same reformatory are intemperate. Of those in the Illinois State Reformatory more than fifty have lost one or both parents.<sup>2</sup>

While the schools cannot take the place of the home the question may very properly be raised as to whether they may not be so organized as to

<sup>1</sup> "Report of the Juvenile Court, 1910," p. 66.

<sup>2</sup> See last reports from these institutions.

become a more efficient social force. Of course we all know just what ought to be accomplished. The schools should be made so thorough that the graduates will be equipped for any occupation, and so interesting that the children will anticipate each day's session as they now do a holiday. Then there would be no complaint from business men that high-school boys cannot spell, or cipher, or write correct English; and college freshmen would justify the first part of James Russell Lowell's statement that Cambridge is very learned, "because the freshmen bring so much knowledge into the town and the seniors take so little away." The difficulty, however, is to produce the situation which we all agree is desirable. It is not easy to unite the complex ingredients that make up study and boy into a mixture that will not ferment and explode. Perhaps one trouble is that the compound has been too tightly corked.

The biographies of eminent men show that the teachers who exercised the greatest influence over their lives were the ones who were most completely emancipated from rules and systems.<sup>1</sup> It is to be regretted that biographies are limited to men who have become famous. But for boys less fortunately endowed mentally we have the evidence of self-governing schools, as well as the various

<sup>1</sup> "Mind in the Making," by Edgar James Swift, chap. III.

junior republics and reformatory institutions, to which reference has been made in earlier chapters, that those of ordinary ability, and even such as have excellent criminal prospects, reciprocate with amazing faithfulness the confidence imposed in them. When we ask the reason for this mutual interchange of confidence, psychology gives the answer. Man, we have said, reacts to a stimulus in like manner to its action upon him. If he stubs his toe on a stone he is prone to kick the obstruction. When he refrains it is for social rather than ethical reasons. In his dealings with his fellow men also, he gives in kind what he receives.

The prisoners of the Montpelier (Vermont) jail go about the town just like other men, performing the work at which they are employed.<sup>1</sup> They have no guards because they do not need them. Under the old system the sheriff was in constant fear of a jail delivery. And he had cause for his anxiety. When at work the men formerly did only as much as was necessary to escape the penalty of insubordination. "I'm doing just as little as I can and not be punished, and I'm going to keep on. You would do the same," said one of the prisoners to the sheriff. This was when the

<sup>1</sup> See "Humanizing the Prisons," by Morrison I. Swift, *Atlantic Monthly*, vol. 108, 1911, p. 170.

men received no compensation for their work and were constantly watched by officious guards. Now that they are not watched and receive all over one dollar that their labor brings, they do an honest day's work. During the four years of this system of trusting the men, only two out of eight hundred prisoners allowed full freedom have attempted to escape. This is a remarkable example of the principle that in human relations action and reaction are of the same kind. Men give back what they get.

Every teacher knows that this is also the way with boys. The bad ones are those of good stuff. But they cannot be managed by punishment. They have too much independence for that sort of treatment. They react to the punishment in the same way that the punishment acts upon them. Their resentment, however, goes out to the method and system, and not, as a rule, to the one who is responsible for the pain and humiliation. They play according to the rules of the game and try to beat the system. The result is that punishment becomes a continuous procedure. A vicious chain of action and reaction is set up—misdemeanor, punishment, misdemeanor, punishment. The writer once taught in a school where delinquents were kept after school to learn the lessons which they had not studied during school hours,

or to atone for other pedagogical sins. The striking fact was that the same boys and girls were always detained. They expected to be kept and never made engagements which would interfere with the usual course of events, much as one does not try to thwart nature's law of gravitation. Extra periods of work were an accepted part of their school routine. Yet, notwithstanding the trouble which they caused, I may add, with a wider knowledge of the nature of young savages, that they were the choicest specimens in the room.

Place beside this another picture. On the floor in the back of the school-room are three boys busily working over a relief map which they can see better in this position than if it were hung upon the wall. In a corner of the room, far enough away to avoid disturbance, a small girl is drilling one of her schoolmates in United States history, and in the cloak-room two children are working over spelling. Boys and girls move about, but a little observation shows that they are attending to their business, going to one place or another as they need books or material for their work. Everywhere the order of the workshop prevails rather than that of the school. When the teacher was asked if the confusion did not distract the attention of the children, she replied: "Judge for yourself. They are all at work, and they pay no

attention to what others are doing unless it concerns their own work."

"Do you keep children after school?"

"Oh, no! There is no occasion for that. Each one does all that he can, and that is all one should expect."

"What about the discipline?"

"Discipline! That takes care of itself." And then she added: "A teacher needs three qualifications: knowledge of her subject, recognition of the rights of children, and a sense of humor."

I have reflected much about the last two of these qualifications since making the acquaintance of this school: the right of children to lead their racial life, to feel, in sport, the thrills that tingled through the nerves of primitive man in danger; their right to initiate action, to decide upon the proper course of conduct under conditions suited to their years; the right not to be bored.

The teacher, like the preacher, has his audience at his mercy. In both instances, this is one of the obstacles to raising the average efficiency above mediocrity. With children the state of being bored is a fertile culture for various disorders, chiefly ethical, since self-control is a habit long before it is a principle of conduct. Professor Edward L. Thorndike once suggested that a court stenographer be a part of the equipment

of every college, to take down in shorthand all that the lecturer said. It would be an admirable stimulus to efficiency. The writer would urge the extension of the plan to the elementary and secondary schools.<sup>1</sup> Could a teacher occasionally read everything that he said during his lecture or recitation he would wonder less at the inattention and lack of self-control of his hearers.

We have found that to keep boys contented with their work things must move. This is a refreshing, hopeful fact. It gives opportunity to create situations from which children may absorb ethical ideas. After all, much of our effective education in early life comes by absorption. If situations are cleverly planned, children react to them from the ethical points of view round which the plans are focussed. They react in this way because the situations require just this sort of reaction to secure the results which the children themselves desire. In arranging an educational situation, the criterion of success, as in all other plans, is, will it work? Given the thing that you wish boys to do, or the conclusion to which you wish them to come, then the problem

<sup>1</sup>As this book is going through the press the writer learns that a court stenographer has been used by Dr. Romiett Stevens in an experimental study of the recitation. See the *Teachers' College Record*, September, 1910, and "The Question as a Measure of Efficiency in Instruction," 1912.

is to produce such a set of conditions as will make the desired kind of action inevitable. This, of course, requires a profound knowledge of child psychology, but no one should teach who lacks such knowledge.

One may not be able to predict the action of a single individual, but the response of a group of boys under known conditions can be as positively foretold as the rising of the morning sun. Naturally, the frankness and tact of the teacher—indeed, all that belongs to the vague but meaningful term, personality—are important factors in the problem. Boys receive credit for being the uncertain, indeterminable element of the school-room. This is one of the popular pedagogical fallacies. The notion is a convenient excuse for incompetent teachers. This accounts for its general acceptance. It has been repeated so many times that its truthfulness seems self-evident.

Now, as a matter of fact, boys are painfully consistent. Perhaps consistency is a primitive characteristic. At all events, the lower animals possess it in a high degree. Were this not true they could not be trapped so easily. Among men, progress in knowledge disturbs the fixed system of ideas. To-day's thoughts may find no intellectual or moral sanction to-morrow. Boys are more dependable because they have fewer conflicting



ideas. Their principles of conduct may not always appeal to us, but they are consistent with the ethics of their group. More than this, the morale of a group is always consistent with itself. But it is excessively sensitive to external influences. It responds with astonishing delicacy to altered conditions. We have found illustrations of this in the delinquent children of the better sort of reform schools and in the Cleveland Boys' Home. In their native haunts of the congested districts the demands of the boys are for criminal acts. Under changed conditions the impulses are altered. In both cases they are consistent and predictable. Evidently the fulcrum here is the situation in which the boys are placed.

We have found the various forms of pupil self-government eminently successful in creating educational situations for promoting ethical habits of conduct through self-control. William George gives an instance from the history of his junior republic.

Mr. George had been staging his usual morning whipping scene to the delight of the assembled boys and girls. He chanced to glance over the company, "and a look of expectancy was plainly written on every face." Suddenly it occurred to him to make the children the judges of the guilt of the accused. But let Mr. George describe the scene in his own words.

“‘I am going to let Lanky and Curly tell their story to you,’ he said to the boys, ‘and then I am going to let you decide whether they shall be punished or go free. It’s up to you.’

“In an instant there was a change of attitude on the part of every boy and girl present. They straightened up in their seats, nodded approval to one another and likewise to me. There was a new light in the features of each one of the entire company of those young people. This light pleased me. I felt that justice would be done.

“‘Now, son, you may get up and tell your fellow-citizens all about the matter.’

“Lanky was regarded as something of a wit, and he had a peculiar drawl in his speech. He arose solemnly, elevated his eyes to the roof of the tent, then gradually turned on a pivot, until he presented a front to the company. All this time he kept his eyes elevated.

“‘Oh, no; I hain’t stole no apples. Oh, no!’ he said solemnly.

“This was intended to throw the entire company into convulsions, and under ordinary circumstances it would have been a successful effort, but now not an individual even smiled. This had the effect of instantly disconcerting Lanky. His head and his eyes dropped suddenly, and for the first time he gazed into the faces of his com-

panions, and Lanky saw the same expression upon their faces that I had seen, but the effect on him was entirely different.

"It was a keen, discriminating jury that he was facing. The idea of their regarding him as a culprit filled him momentarily with anger. The presumption of their daring to decide on his case! That defiance that is seen so often in street boys flamed forth.

"'Aw, every one of youse has stolen apples,' he snapped out.

"No one replied, but steadily they gazed at him as much as to say: 'Have you anything else to offer?'

"Then Lanky got rattled. Stage fright with all its horrors suddenly seized him. Every trace of defiance suddenly vanished on the instant, and he stood a pathetic picture before them. What could he do to extricate himself?

"'Say, fellers,' he snivelled, 'I didn't steal de apples. Curly here is de bloke w'at stole dem.'

"It took but an instant for him to see that this was the worst course he could possibly have adopted. Two or three said: 'Shame! Shame!' and although it had prejudiced his case, it had served to bring back the defiance in his nature and he suddenly bawled out:

“‘Aw, kill me if youse wan’ ter,’ and he sat down.

“I turned to the company and said, ‘Is he guilty or not guilty?’

“There was a momentary pause. One boy in the crowd, evidently thinking that they did not know what I meant, shouted out:

“‘He wants to know wedder he done it or wedder he didn’t done it.’

“Up went a perfect howl: ‘He done it.’

“It was now Curly’s turn. So he arose and said with perfect frankness: ‘Yes, I took de apples, but Lanky didn’t play me quite a square deal when he said I took all of dem. I don’t know which one of us took de most. I don’t t’ink we counted, but I took me share, and I’m willin’ to take me share of de thrashing, but I just want ter tell youse fellers dat I’m goin’ ter hold up me right hand and promise dat I hope ter die if I ever take any more, ’cause I know ’tain’t right ter steal, and me mudder would feel orful bad if she know’d I had been crookin’, and dat’s all I got ter say.’ And with that neat little speech he dropped down on the bench, buried his face in his hands, and cried as if his heart would break.

“I said: ‘Is he guilty?’

“No hand was raised.

“‘Not guilty?’

"Not a hand appeared. Instead a very animated conversation suddenly took place between the assembled company. They were evidently discussing all the fine points. A group of older lads at the rear of the tent seemed to be particularly absorbed in the discussion of the case. Finally one of that group said:

"'Mister George, dere hain't no doubt 'bout it. Curly is guilty; but say, Mister George, won't youse please go light on him?'

"There was a clear recommendation for mercy, and I proceeded to 'go light' on Curly—light enough, I may say, to suit the most sentimental critic."<sup>1</sup>

Social and ethical attitudes grow out of the relation between ideas. The social feeling varies in different individuals because of the various forms which these relationships take. The writer once spent several days with a tramp and was able, through friendship, to learn something of the philosophy of his actions. "If I work," he said, "I can only earn my living, because my employer will take the rest. I can get a living without working, so what's the use of tiring myself out?" From his point of view the argument was unanswerable. But he had very strong convictions against robbery.

<sup>1</sup> "The Junior Republic," by William R. George, pp. 44-48.

The two sorts of selves so noticeable in criminals reveal an interesting double system of ideas, one referring to society at large and the other relating to their own set. "The criminal," says Josiah Flynt, "has two systems of morality: one for his business and the other for the 'hang-out.' The first is this: 'Society admits that the quarrel with me is over after I have served out my sentence; and I, naturally enough, take the same view of the matter. It is simply one of take and pay. I take something from society and give in exchange so many years of my life. If I come out ahead, so much the better for me. If society comes out ahead, so much the worse for me, and there is no use in whimpering over the transaction.'" <sup>1</sup> But in his "hang-out" the situation is changed. "The criminal," continues Flynt, "has treated me with an altruism that even a Tolstoi might admire. . . . It is a notorious fact that he will 'divvy' his last meal with a pal, . . . and I have never known him to tell me a lie or to cheat me or to make fun of me behind my back. . . . It sometimes happens in his raids that he makes mistakes and gets into the wrong house, or has been deceived about the wealth of his victims; and if he discovers that he has robbed a poor man, or one who cannot conveniently bear the

<sup>1</sup> "Tramping with Tramps," p. 22.

loss, he is ashamed and never enjoys the plunder thus won.”<sup>1</sup>

It looks as though the criminal were an average sort of man with several partially contradictory systems of ideas, wherein he is much like the rest of mankind. He differs from those of us who by courtesy are called “normal,” in the nature of his ideas and in the sorts of contradictions which prevail among them. His ethics makes him faithful to his friends, which is not always true of non-criminals, and the same code justifies him in taking money from those who, in his judgment, need it less than he himself. In this last characteristic his dissent from modern business procedure is more a difference of method than of fact. Circumstances have doubtless caused this slight divergence. It certainly is not always lack of ability, for, according to Flynt, they “are often gifted with talents which would enable them to do well in any class could they only be brought to realize their responsibilities and to take advantage of opportunities.” The hierarchy of ideas amid which those men grew up evidently played a tremendously important part in shaping their ideals of conduct. This is shown, among other things, by their double system of ethics. Heredity might be invoked to explain their social an-

<sup>1</sup> Flynt, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-24.

tagonisms were it not for the contradictions which they so often manifest to those anti-social attitudes. They are not made up wholly of social antagonisms. Their altruism among their fellows, mentioned by Flynt, their keen, if novel, feeling for justice, which forbids robbing the poor, and their readiness for new adaptations, amounting often to a complete reorganization of ideas and habits of action, as seen in the Colorado prisoners, cannot be accounted for by a theory of fixed heredity.

If we regard the criminal impulses of these men as racial instincts cultivated in a vicious environment during early life, the contradictions and readaptations become intelligible. The problem of ethical growth in children then becomes largely a question of instincts either properly developed or else deferred to a period when they are no longer dominating forces. The racial impulses tend toward the primitive life. These instincts, as we have seen, are legitimate in children, but if allowed to mature in the primitive manner into adult life, they produce an habitual criminal. Some of the ways in which these impulses may be controlled and utilized for mental and moral growth have been discussed in preceding chapters. The essential point here is that when they are diverted into educative channels by putting respon-



sibility and authority upon the boys, or through adventurous actions which both satisfy the racial longing and lead to social judgments, the primitive mode of expression of the racial instincts may be deferred till their virulent period has passed. Meanwhile habits of ethical conduct are established.

The struggle to fit into the conditions of their environment is just as intense a problem for children as for adults. Boys are continually trying, in a more or less random fashion, to cope successfully with the situations that confront them. It is the method of trial and error, and the action finally adopted is the one which secures the desired result. Intelligence does not yet play a leading part in determining action. The reason for this is that the experience which would furnish the means of judging results is lacking in children. Consequently their efforts to succeed are more or less fortuitous, depending on the aggregation of circumstances. The estimate of results is, of course, a relative one. The standard of success is created by the environment, and adaptation to this standard is enforced by the prevailing sentiment.

The great mass of boys are left to situations that arise from chance. The conditions surrounding them are unplanned, as with the lower ani-

Boys

and

mals. Now, the same adaptations prevail in man as in the animals below him. The difference between the two in this respect consists in the greater ability of man to foresee results and profit by experience. Children, as we have seen, lack the experience from which they might profit, consequently the ethical problem is to surround them with conditions which shall stimulate the desired reaction. The superior intelligence of the adult lays this duty upon him. We have the problem of directing intelligence, for nature cannot do this intelligently, since it is itself unintelligent. The situations which it creates are chance variations. Man, on the other hand, can decide upon desirable lines of progress and create conditions which will call out new adaptations in the youth. In doing this he is not overruling nature, but is simply employing its forces intelligently.

Talking, in conjunction with the rod, has always been a favorite means of moral training. It is the easiest way and is agreeable to the speaker. Expounding one's ideas is a pleasant occupation. It gives one a comfortable feeling of moral worth to be setting the world right. But advice can never outweigh the conditions of life which oppose it. The efficient way is to beset children with situations which appeal to them as creations

of their own thoughts. Then they react toward them as they do toward their games, with enthusiasm and frankness. Thus morality becomes an integral part of their school business, and its observance is enforced by the group sentiment among the children which forbids deception, loafing, or unfairness. In this way the double system of morality so commonly found in schools is eliminated, and the children grow into the feeling that the mental and moral life are not separate compartments to be opened or closed according to convenience or utility.

Children act morally long before they know why they do so. The discussion of principles of conduct comes later. Indeed it is a mistake to make boys and girls overconscious of ethical motives. For this reason a period set apart for moral instruction is likely to be disastrous. The instructing attitude regarding conduct is always resented. The entire school-work should be a continuous exhibition of moral action, and the greater the freedom allowed, the more spontaneous and habitual will the conduct become. Coercion and restraint are effective only so long as the pressure is on. Excitement is seething beneath, and the moment the restraining force is relaxed, disorder boils over. Social discontent never fermented more in Germany or gained so

many adherents as under the iron rule of Bismarck, when even the pastor of the American church in Berlin was unable to secure permission to hold Sunday evening meetings in his house without the presence of a policeman. The same condition of suppressed disorder is observed in schools which are controlled merely by the authority of the teacher. The only effective order is that which arises in the co-operation of the governed with those in control.

Self-assertion and the desire for activity dominate childhood. At first this self-assertion is individualistic. If children play together, each manages to a large extent his own game. Later, as we shall find, this individualism becomes merged in the group and the gang spirit arises. Instead of every boy's playing his own game they now follow a leader and personal glory gives way to the success of the team. These characteristics should be turned to the advantage of mental and moral development in the school. Children can be made to do anything if they are only convinced that responsibility rests upon them. An illustration will show how this works out.

A nine-year-old boy living in one of the dirty alleys of Philadelphia was dividing his time between attending school and playing truant, the latter occupation receiving rather more than its

due share of attention. His face and hands were always dirty, and if his hair had ever been combed, the record of this fact was lost. Whenever he condescended to be present, he was engaged in asserting his individuality by annoying his fellow-pupils and teacher. One day the school was organized into a self-governing municipality, and Tommy, to the dismay of his teacher, was elected a member of the council. It certainly did not promise well for the success of the plan if the children would put the worst boy of the school in control. The following day, however, Tommy came promptly, and the transformation was wonderful. Buttons had been sewed on to his clothes, his hands and face were clean and his hair combed. The next day he was again on time, and he was just as neat as on the previous day; and, stranger still, the change was permanent. He did not play truant. He improved in his studies, and instead of being at the foot of his class, the little fellow very quickly advanced to the head.

Six weeks afterward the teacher, going through the room, stopped at his desk and said: "Tommy, I am delighted to see how nicely you are getting along. You have not been absent once; besides you are as neat as a little gentleman, and you are doing splendidly in your classes." The youngster looked up and replied: "You know

they expect so much from a member of the city council." <sup>1</sup>

Children, we have found, react according to the manner of treatment which they receive. Surround them with rules and prohibitions and they will obey so long as the overseer is present. But let them find him off his guard and they will select for their amusement the very things which have been forbidden.

Now, the peculiarity about school is that it creates a situation against which children rebel because of the very characteristics which go with childhood. They do not object to work, as is seen in the occupations in which they engage many times on holidays. Nothing could be harder than the tasks which children impose upon themselves. They will spend all of their leisure time for weeks cutting trees and trimming logs with which to build a cabin. Nor, again, do they object to mental work. Were proof of this needed it could be found in the literary clubs and debating societies for which many hours are given to vigorous study. Perhaps it is the manner in which the tasks are put upon them, with an implied assurance of retribution in case of failure and the fact that the teacher assumes the entire responsibility for the work, that dries up

<sup>1</sup> "The School City," pp. 8-9.

the children's enthusiasm for activity. A successful teacher of history in Charlestown, Massachusetts, discovered what so many others have noticed—that her pupils did only so much work as they were compelled to do—and so decided to try an experiment to test the heresy that children can manage the recitation better than the teacher can do it for them. The class was organized into a business meeting. The children elected a president and secretary, and each morning the history lesson was the business of the day. As the teacher told the pupils that they were to conduct the recitation they were in much perplexity as to what they should do with her, but finally it was decided to call her the executive officer. The president called on different members of the class to report on topics in the lesson. If a report was inadequate, some one rose to make corrections or additions. When none of them could state the facts correctly, the subject was laid over as unfinished business until the next meeting. In her description of the work the teacher says: "The roll-call and report [of the secretary on the review lesson] were sometimes finished in five minutes, the lesson of the day in thirty more, and we found ourselves with ten minutes to spare. There were various suggestions as to what we had better do with the extra time. One was that

they take longer lessons; and this led us into the habit of letting them assign their own lessons; and they always took longer ones than I had been in the habit of giving.

"Another suggestion was that the scholars collect pictures and show them to the class during the spare minutes. One boy said he didn't have much luck finding pictures, but he would like to read things in other books and tell them to the class. A girl asked if she might draw some pictures from a book in the library, and still another boy asked permission to go over to the art museum with his camera to take photographs of the things there that were connected with our work. We did all these things and many more. One suggestion led to the richest development of all the work of the year. The classes formed themselves into little informal clubs, met at recess and after school, and decided what each would do to contribute something interesting to the lessons.

"One boy who had tried several times without success to get a chance to talk asked me: 'Do you suppose I shall ever get a chance to tell what I've found about Vestal virgins?' I told him to keep on trying, and finally he found his chance. Another boy wanted to describe a Roman house. He felt the need of a large plan to show the class, and, as he himself could not draw, he asked one



of the girls in the drawing club to help him. She made him a beautiful pen-and-ink sketch of the ground plan of a Roman villa. Still another boy, who was especially interested in Pompeii, had been to considerable trouble to get a certain collection of Pliny's letters from the central library. He had read one of the letters describing the eruption of Vesuvius to the class, and some time afterward he said to me: 'If we have time to-day may I read another letter from Pliny?' 'Isn't that book overdue?' I asked. 'Yes,' he answered, 'but there's another letter in it that the rest ought to hear.' He was willing to pay the fine so that they might hear it."<sup>1</sup>

The spirit of the recitation changed as soon as the work was put in the hands of the children. The enthusiasm was contagious. But still there were several who lagged behind the others. Then, as the teacher has informed the writer in a letter, one of the boys said that he believed he could bring them up if he were made president. The others at once gave him the chance, and he succeeded in nearly all the cases.

An incident which occurred in the class indicated the moral effect of giving children opportunity to control themselves. "The discipline of

<sup>1</sup> "Group-work in the High-School," by Lotta A. Clark, *Elementary School Teacher*, vol. 7, p. 335.

these classes was the easiest I have ever had," continues the teacher, "and became almost entirely unnecessary as the year went on. On one memorable occasion a boy forgot himself and was severely reprimanded. The next day the secretary described the whole occurrence minutely in her report. It nearly took my breath away and met with a storm of protest from the class. We had the report carefully reread, and, on finding that every word of it was perfectly true and proper, the class accepted the report, and it was placed on file with the rest. There was no more unsatisfactory conduct to report in that section."

Now, the difference between these business-meeting recitations and those of the ordinary school was that in the former case the pupils felt that the work was their own. They were directing it and they were responsible for its success or failure. When children are carrying out plans which they have agreed upon, they have no patience with loafers. At such a time work and fair play are the basis of their ethics. The pedagogical attitude puts the responsibility upon the teacher, and children, like the rest of us, are very willing to shift obligations. This method fails to accomplish the best results because it puts the teacher and the children into different if not opposing camps. It does not appeal to the boys' system of ethics.

Activity is, in a large measure, the test of intelligence. Among the lower animals this activity is limited to movements adapted to self-preservation and play. With the advent of man, however, action assumed a new meaning. It was no longer restricted to immediate ends. Plans of a wider reach were then formed and man became a constructive thinker. We are unable to say whether the *Pithecanthropus erectus* was born a man because his arboreal grandparents learned to do a little better thinking than their anthropoid cousins, or whether man is only a mutation freak of nature, but in any case his entire subsequent development is due to the necessity which nature forced upon him of using this newly acquired power. It was a slow process—extending through many hundred thousand years—by which prehistoric man gained effective control of this strangely new power of constructive thought, and throughout the whole period his teacher was the experience secured from his efforts to adjust himself to the situations which threatened his own destruction and the extinction of the race.

The development of children parallels in many respects the history of our savage ancestors. The sins for which Adam received the blame were the virtues of primitive man. Recognition of this has revolutionized moral training. The devil is no longer driven out of children with the whip, but

he is given opportunity for exercising his satanic ingenuity in ways that make for growth in social virtues.

We have not yet learned, however, to utilize the method of racial growth. From the earliest savage of the cave period to the present time, man has gained his experience by action, and action is just the thing that schools do not encourage. To be sure manual training has become popular, and playgrounds are now receiving some attention, but, except for these, action as an element in education begins and ends with the kindergarten. Our present school method of requiring children to sit quietly while they study the lessons which they are to recite, is inherited from the Middle Ages, though one must, of course, admit that raising them from the floor to desk seats is one step upward. A new science of school hygiene has arisen, a large part of which is concerned with the problem of how seats should be constructed in order that children may be kept in them longest without injury. But the question as to whether they may not make better progress if given the same freedom in doing their work as they have when engaged in their own activities has hardly been discussed.

The teacher's problem is evidently to create situations which stimulate children to activity by

appealing to the tribal instincts of the race. Their own associates are then the judges of their acts, and children never appeal their cases from the decision of this court. We have found this true in pupil-government. The reason for it, with the educational consequences, will be more fully discussed in the following chapter.

Traditional pedagogy smiles at the idea of making children the arbiters of the school, but this is because of man's fondness for exercising his power. It is an exhibition in adults of the racial instinct to which we have referred in earlier discussions. But in maturity the excuse for its arrogant use, which may be cited for children, does not exist. Those who have tried the experiment of making children responsible for the work and actions of their fellows have observed great improvement in scholarship, and discipline has taken care of itself. Its value in moral training consists in the fact that, among children, the public sentiment of their fellows is both exacting and efficient. They will combine against a command of the teacher, but they never long resist a mandate of their associates. An individual child may be perverse, but the pupil-body when in power will insist that he act with them for the good of the body politic of the school. This is moral training, and it frees the school from the artificial organization

which makes it so different from life in the outside world. When the group is made the basis of organization and action, children acquire habits of industry and ethical conduct because of the demands of school sentiment. And this calls out the best that there is in them. It is the basis of social conduct.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE SPIRIT OF THE GANG: AN EDUCATIONAL ASSET

THE gang instinct is almost as much a part of boy nature as is the desire to swim or play baseball. Sheldon<sup>1</sup> found 934 societies reported by 1,139 boys, and 911 similar organizations by 1,145 girls. From another miscellaneous collection of 1,022 boys, 862 societies were reported by Forbush,<sup>2</sup> and Puffer<sup>3</sup> says that out of 146 boys in the Lyman Industrial School, 128 were in gangs. Frequently a boy belonged to several such societies. Finally, "it is safe to say that three out of four boys belong to a gang," according to Puffer, and Sheldon, as a result of his investigation, says: "American children left to themselves, organize."

The time for the formation of gangs is from ten or eleven years of age to about the sixteenth year. Under certain conditions the period may be extended, but when that is the case it usually indicates arrested development. Gangs are the expression of primitive tendencies. An environ-

<sup>1</sup> *American Journal of Psychology*, vol. 9, p. 429.

<sup>2</sup> *Pedagogical Seminary*, vol. 7, p. 313.

<sup>3</sup> *Pedagogical Seminary*, vol. 12, p. 175.

ment incapable of draining off these instincts into channels which make for social growth perpetuates the racial impulses of early man. Examples of this are the Mafia secret society of Sicily and the Camorra in Naples, the latter having recently become prominent because of the trial of some of its members. The history of criminology is replete with organizations that owe their existence to the survival of primitive instincts.<sup>1</sup>

Probably it is because of the age at which gangs are normal that physical activity is the common bond of union. Sheldon found 111 predatory societies, 406 athletic clubs, and 59 industrial organizations among the boys to whom we have referred above. According to Forbush, "predatory and athletic societies number 77 per cent. Add to these the industrial, and we have 85½ per cent of the whole." Some form of physical activity and sociability seems to have characterized all of the gangs to which the Lyman (reform) school boys belonged. This is, of course, to be expected in the case of reform-school children, since philanthropic, literary, and artistic ideals, the stimuli for organization among some of the other groups, had not entered into their lives. The names of some of the gangs among the

<sup>1</sup> Numerous examples may be found in Jacob A. Riis's "How the Other Half Live."



inmates of the Lyman school are suggestive of the aims and life of the lads. "The Eggmen" (because they robbed farmers), "The Wharf Rats" (because their meeting-place was a wharf), "Liners," and "Crooks" are among those mentioned by Puffer.

These kinds of gangs are the result of a deep-seated racial antipathy to the modern conditions of city and school which do not give boys a chance to live their life. The very purposes of the long period of immaturity are ignored in the conditions which are put upon children. Their bodily organization demands opportunity to try its powers that nervous paths may be opened for motor discharge. "There is plain evidence in the reports of these boys," says Puffer in a recent study<sup>1</sup> of the gang, "that they were tired of the inactivity, restraint, and monotony of the school and longed for the greater excitement and adventure outside. The boys who cannot run away from home get their adventures at second hand by way of the theatre."

"The theatre," Jane Addams tells us, "has a strange power to forecast life for the youth. Each boy comes from our ancestral past not 'in entire forgetfulness,' and quite as he unconsciously uses ancient war-cries in his street play, so he longs to

<sup>1</sup> *McClure's Magazine*, October, 1911, p. 682.

reproduce and to see set before him the valors and vengeance of a society embodying a much more primitive state of morality than that in which he finds himself.”<sup>1</sup>

Instances showing the longing for real life—to see something “doing” and to have a share in it—as a motive for the genesis of gangs would easily fill a volume. A typical case will serve as an illustration. Other examples of somewhat different import were cited in the chapter on “The Spirit of Adventure.” The acts in which gangs engage always have a social content. A group may be large or small, but if the boys have a common purpose which binds them together for exploits and mutual protection they constitute a gang. In the case of small boys, however, the bond of union often breaks when they are caught.

The following instance was taken from a recent issue of a newspaper.<sup>2</sup> Names and unessential facts are omitted.

Three very small and very tearful youngsters, whose fright ill accorded with the warlike shields, made from the metal tops of ash-cans, and bags of stones, to be used as weapons, which hung from their arms and shoulders, were led into the Alexander Avenue Station, in the Bronx, last night by four big policemen. The boys tried hard to appear at ease, but their misfortune overwhelmed them, for of all the members of the 149th Street gang and their hereditary rivals, the

<sup>1</sup> “The Spirit of Youth,” by Jane Addams, pp. 77-78.

<sup>2</sup> *New York Times*, August 28, 1911.

Saint Ann Avenue gang, they alone had fallen prisoners to the police.

They had been taken when the policemen swept down on the battling gangs a few minutes before in Saint Mary's Park. There the battle of stones had waged fiercely for more than half an hour, the 149th Streeters again and again braving the fire of the Saint Ann Avenue gang as they stormed the hill in the park, almost opposite Beekman Avenue, on which their rivals had taken a stand.

Gang fights have been frequent in the neighborhood for several weeks. There has been no ill-feeling in the matter. The question has been a purely ethical one of superiority, and since previous encounters had failed to settle this to the satisfaction of all concerned, yesterday was selected by the opposing leaders for a battle to a finish. Plans were formed days ahead, and as a result housekeepers in the vicinity of Saint Mary's Park, which is bounded by Saint Ann and Robbins Avenues and 143d and 149th Streets, have missed the covers of their ash-cans. From these the rival armies manufactured shields, and for weapons they chose plain stones, which could be picked up in the streets or vacant lots. The time was set for shortly before five o'clock, and an hour before this the warriors began to assemble.

By vantage of a majority among the early comers, the Saint Ann Avenue gang seized the hill and prepared to defend it against the assault of the 149th Streeters. Had they had their choice the latter would have taken the hill, but with the arrival of their leader they organized quickly for a combined assault on the citadel. On the rising ground were some forty-odd boys, and as many more, none more than fourteen and some less than ten years old, gathered at the foot.

It was raining a light drizzle, and the park was deserted. Not a policeman was in sight. At a signal the assault was started, and under cover of a flurry of stones the raiders dashed for the hill. Then stones began to fly thick and fast. They bounded from the ash-cover shields and occasionally from the bodies of the combatants, but in the heat of the fray the warriors failed to notice that a goodly number also

whizzed into the street, where presently there began to sound the crash of broken windows and the tinkle of falling glass.

A resident of the neighborhood saw a rock come through one of his windows and he narrowly missed half a dozen more when he looked out of the door to see what was the matter. It angered him and he telephoned to the police. It was then the city guards led a sortie against the rival armies. For an instant besieged and besiegers thought of making common cause against the police, but some one quailed and presently the armies were flying for their various homes at top speed.

According to the police, a dozen windows had been smashed in Saint Ann Avenue and half a dozen more in Beekman Avenue. Therefore they charged their prisoners with juvenile delinquency, and locked them up.

Before supper-time, however, hostages in the shape of deeds for property had been given, and the warriors were led home by their respective parents.

An instinct that has such a grip on boys as is indicated by the number of their organizations, and which exercises a control that brings all children under its sway, even continuing its power into early manhood when conditions are unsuitable for outgrowing it, seems to offer more educational possibilities than have been used.

Sociability and activity are the racial stimulants behind boys' societies. The origin of both impulses must be sought in the lower animals. The purposes of sociability have remained much the same through the ages, but with the appearance of man, activity underwent an important change.

The animals contemporaneous with our first ancestors had found their place in the world of life. Nature had attended to that, and the fact of their survival was its proof. Man, however, was a novelty that lacked many elements of self-protection possessed by his lower kin. He must have had to establish his right to exist against almost overwhelming obstacles. Probably it was his superior intellect that enabled him to survive while he was learning to adapt himself to conditions to which, in other respects, he could hardly have been so well fitted as those from whom he sprung. The ceaseless dangers that surrounded him could have left no time for useless action. He had to work and, to the extent of his mental power, to plan for self-protection.

It was because of this early need for effective action that man became a constructive creature. He is averse to effort which he thinks useless, but is keenly alert to do that which is definite and concrete.

This instinct for construction or "workmanship" is evidently the lever by which children may be lifted out of their predatory exploits of savagery to the activities of modern life. One of the first questions, then, which arises in this process of shifting ideals is the method of securing the attention for things that promote modern culture.

Education has been suffering lately from a sort of dual personality. Its psychology and practice move along in more or less parallel lines without the one greatly interfering with the other. Evidence that interest does not precede but always follows attention to an idea or group of ideas does not deter the enthusiastic teacher from giving this interest an external source instead of ascribing it to the mind.

Just here is where racial instincts with all their powerful claim to "involuntary" attention enter directly into the problem. If, as is generally admitted, "voluntary" attention differs from "involuntary" in the number and sort of ideas which are applicants for the limited space in the focus of consciousness, the very practical question arises concerning the part the educator may play in this contest. It looks as though he enters the competition with racial instincts, so heavily handicapped as hardly to be able to show his wares.

The feelings have been thought to be the strategic base of operations from which a successful flanking movement could be started. The innumerable and disorderly mental processes of youngsters could then, it was believed, be driven into a narrower line of march, and finally, as they became more restricted, be compelled, in sheer self-defence, to give heed to the interesting ideas

which the skilful teachers always put at the head of their attacking column.

Unfortunately, however, for this theory, a little observation shows how unreliable are the feelings and emotions when we have marshalled our educational forces for the attack. A college student recently told the writer that, after an eloquent exposition by his professor of English history of the period of George III, it was mentioned, as an instance of that monarch's abstemiousness, that he always had boiled mutton and turnips for dinner. Now, if there are any articles of diet which this student abhors, it is boiled mutton and turnips. Consequently, all the deserving ideas related to the period of George III were forced to yield, for the time, to the domination of turnips and mutton, and when, the following year, George III was reached in American history, all other ideas were driven from the consciousness of this young man while he breathlessly waited again for mutton and turnips. Evidently the feelings are an unsafe educational guide, if hateful objects and ideas may be as attractive as those which are pleasant.

Again, rewards and penalties have seemed to some to be the effective means of winning the attention. The first of these fails on account of the uncertainty of pupils regarding the sort of knowl-

edge which will secure the reward, and the second is unproductive because the teacher and the implied punishment are too prominent in the consciousness of the youthful learner for efficient concentration. Further, both of these incentives divide the attention. The prerequisite of a productive state of consciousness is that all diverting ideas and objects, including the teacher himself, pass out of consciousness and leave the field free for the competitive interaction of the mental processes created by the work in hand. Ideas may be forced upon children while the native impulses are restrained by penalties, much as one may be compelled to eat what does not suit one's taste, but the mind refuses to react, just as gastric juice is stingy of its flow when food is unattractive.

We have seen that the growing points in elementary and secondary education are the various types of schools for delinquents. The reason for this, as has been said, is that the boys in these schools are so much the primitive man that the traditional plan of education breaks down completely when applied to them. On this account, the experimental method, which until recently was regarded as so heretical as to justify the excommunication of its advocates from communion with righteous pedagogues, was forced upon those in charge. The result is that delinquents have the



best schools. And they secured them by refusing to submit to the traditional method.

Not the least curious thing about these disciplinary schools is that they require less discipline than the ordinary school. Of course, a dose of disciplinary medicine is sometimes necessary at the beginning. It has much the same value as that which David Harum attributed to fleas on a dog. Too sudden a break with one's past is likely to prove disastrous.

It should be remembered that disciplinary schools and reformative institutions deal with youngsters who cannot be controlled in the ordinary school. To be able, under these circumstances, to produce in the majority of boys a condition of consciousness attentive to study and to develop a mental attitude responsive to social incentives is certainly remarkable.

Instances of unusual influence over pupils have been noticed at times, but such successes are generally explained by the vague term, personality. The method of these teachers, however, is strikingly similar. They secure attention to their ideas by identifying them with the racial instincts characteristic of boys.

Attention is an attitude of mind that is conditioned by the mental content. In the more mature, many derived interests cluster around de-

sire for success, but in children these controlling elements only occasionally exist. The problem of the schools, therefore, is to capture a purposeless, wayward attention often enough, and to hold it long enough, to impress the mind with the significance of a few derived interests which may serve as a new base of operations from which to push on to further development. One's attitude toward knowledge depends upon the mental content. The ideas and activities of children are the stuff out of which their thoughts are made. In early life this material is social, and it is social because it is racial.

Johnson says<sup>1</sup> that the children in his vacation school preferred "to submit to a flogging as evidence that they sincerely intended to resist temptation" to disobey, "rather than to stay away from school." "Nearly every species of butterfly to be found in Andover [Mass.] during the season was captured" by his children. Many kinds of caterpillars were watched as they developed into chrysalides in the cages, and nearly all the different kinds of fishes to be found in the streams and ponds were caught and studied. Much of this work was done outside of school hours. Think what it would mean if enthusiasm like this could be transferred to every branch of student pursuit!

<sup>1</sup> *Pedagogical Seminary*, vol. 6, p. 516.

Boys organize because it is their nature to herd together. Self-protection was probably the incentive to gregariousness in the lower animals, and with the appearance of man this same impulse to unite in bands gained increased strength from his helplessness against the fierce animals by which he was surrounded. Like all primitive tendencies, this gregarious instinct is natural to children at a certain age, but indicates arrested development when it continues dominant into early manhood. This is the case with those young men of twenty years and upward whose shooting carnivals find a conspicuous place in the headlines of daily papers. The interesting fact about these abnormal cases is that along with the primitive brutality which makes such men a menace to society, they also retain some of the virtues which characterize the gang at the normal age. They are faithful to the moral code of the gang even to the extent of protecting those who have grievously injured them. They accept defeat calmly and die unavenged rather than violate the ethics of the gang by betraying the one who committed the crime. "There is no good telling you anything; I don't want to help the cops,"<sup>1</sup> said a dying man of twenty-eight to a friend who asked who shot him.

<sup>1</sup> *Saint Louis Globe-Democrat*, and *Post-Dispatch*, December 26, 1911.

It is the ready-made organization and its code of ethics of which we have been speaking that gives the gang its educational importance. Failure to recognize these social relations of boys and to utilize them in the educative process places teachers in direct antagonism to the strongest forces of youth. The school with the "open shop" is a failure. Teachers must recognize the children's union.

The modern school-master has his own way of doing things. Anything that smacks of compromise with his pupils is abhorrent to his nature. Their lessons are to be learned because he assigns them, and order is to be maintained at his behest. Yet, after all, habits of study and behavior are not best acquired under constraint. Self-control—the condition to which training should lead—depends upon ideas and the more or less perfected thought systems into which they are organized, and, in children, this is a matter of growth through experiences that establish habits of action. Compulsion should come from circumstances which impel to right conduct rather than originate in authority that gains its power from the fear which it produces. But control through authority and fear is in the line of least resistance because it is the method of the lower animals and of primitive man. Consequently it

does not require the expenditure of energy that thinking exacts. The responsibility for this inertia in school matters may often be traced back to the board of education and even to the parents. "If we try to do anything out of the usual the parents complain and a member of the board comes to the school and orders it stopped," said a superintendent in a small town. "We are not even allowed to show it to him or to explain the advantages." One is reminded of Mark Twain's observation: "In the first place God made idiots. This was for practice. Then he made school boards."<sup>1</sup>

We said a moment ago that the significance of the gang lies in its system of ethics and in the fact that it has an organization ready for any use. The code of morals of the youngsters grows out of their social relations. Boys of the gang age have no respect for a tale-bearer, or for a "sissy," and they punish with the utmost severity any associate who is not square.

A boy who had so recently joined a self-governing newsboys' association that he was unfamiliar with the way in which they did business was handed twenty-five cents for a morning paper. "He had no change, but excused himself to 'step across the way to get it.' Instead of going into the store the boy started on a run around the

<sup>1</sup> "Following the Equator," p. 597.

building and was soon lost from sight. 'I might have expected it,' remarked the gentleman to a friend. This was overheard by two newsboys. One said: 'Oh, no, mister, your money is not lost. We'll have it for you in ten minutes. Don't you be uneasy. You stand right where you are for a few minutes.'

"Away ran the boys, one going to the right, the other to the left, and a third, who took to the alley, joined them. In less than ten minutes the boy was brought to bay and appeared before the gentleman. An apology was given and the money returned.

"'Don't you say anything to him,' said one of the newsboys; 'we won't do a thing to him, oh, no.' The man soon forgot the incident, and will never know the severe punishment that boy had to bear. They took him into the alley, bumped his head against the wall of the building, rolled him in the mud, took his badge from him, and with a parting word of advice left him. The badge was turned over to the president [of the association] with instructions to return it to the boy at the expiration of fifteen days. What for? The president did not know and only learned the particulars a month later from one of the officers. The boy called for his badge, and it was given to him without a word.

"The books show that this same boy, after leaving the junior grade in school, procured a good position and the proprietor particularly called attention to him for a peculiar trait. 'The boy applied for work—office work. We gave him a job. He asked particularly how many hours he must work, when he was to begin and when to stop. This given, we were surprised to see that he was at the office every morning two hours before his time and pegging away at a typewriter. His wages have been increased three times. He'll be one of the firm before we're through with him.

"'The only recommendation he had was that he was a member of the Boyville Newsboys' Association—and this we took. In fact it proved a better recommendation than that offered by his mother, who called to get a part of his wages to purchase whiskey.'" <sup>1</sup>

And yet teachers insist that they cannot be expected to overcome bad home influences! These newsboys did not have even such contact with this lad as the schools have with their pupils, but they changed him into a man. Teachers have not made a beginning in the use of social forces for education. Boys when organized for self-government instinctively train one another better than teachers, with all their learning, train them. But

<sup>1</sup> "Boyville," by John E. Gunkel, pp. 99-101.

what are some of the ideals which are put before them?

Puffer,<sup>1</sup> in his recent study of the gang, found that the leaders excel the others in truthfulness, perseverance, generosity, bravery, reason, shrewdness, and independence. These are pretty good qualities for boys to emulate. Shrewdness is the only one about which there can be any question, but shrewdness when tempered with truthfulness and generosity is, after all, not so bad. Boys certainly might be under worse training, especially when we find that mental brightness and attention to the thing in hand are joined with the other qualities which boys admire in their leaders. If these are among the virtues of the gang, and we must not forget that Puffer investigated a crowd of selected "bad boys," *i. e.*, reform-school children, the question is how to avail ourselves of these ideals in the development of children. This is where the ready-made organization comes in. Let us see how it may be used.

A teacher of wide experience was placed in charge of a school which had always borne a bad name. He had a reputation as a disciplinarian, and that was the reason for his selection. He found no difficulty in keeping order in the rooms when he was about. His size and eye were enough

<sup>1</sup> *McClure's Magazine*, October, 1911.



for that, but the complaints of the neighbors did not cease. Garbage pails and ash-cans continued to be overturned, and nothing which the boys could lay their hands on was safe. The teacher discovered also that, like his predecessors, he could not rely on anything the boys told him. Notes of excuse were forged, and it was necessary to keep the doors of the building locked until his arrival. The principal set apart a period for moral instruction, but the boys winked at one another while he was talking and during recess laughed at what he had said. It was too humiliating for one of his experience and reputation, so he resigned.

His successor had no recommendations except the successful management of a boys' club in a neighboring town. His selection was due to the fact that no one of experience was available. The school had already wrecked too many reputations.

It is impossible to analyze the reasons for the success of a good teacher. Personality is too complex. But before the boys knew just what had happened the new teacher was a member of their gang.

It turned out that the boys had no evening loafing place except the street, so the school was opened for them. There was no attempt to make the evening intellectual. Games of various sorts

were played. Whatever the boys called for was in order. The leader of the group was soon known. This came out in the natural course of events. And, after that, he was frequently called into consultation by the principal. Strange ideas came to this leader through these conferences. They were so different from those to which his followers had been accustomed! No one knew where he obtained them. He himself did not know. He thought they were his own, and so they were. But then, of course, the thoughts of all of us grow out of the situations in which we are placed or are suggested by conversations. It does not matter how the ideas came to him. The important thing is that he felt them as his own and that they were carried out with all of the enthusiasm which boys put into their impulses.

Everything came out in time. For several years it had been a tradition in the gang to "beat" the teacher. There was nothing personal in it. Several of their teachers, the boys admitted, were "all right." It was the class to which they belonged that was hated. All of the depredations in the neighborhood and the petty thievery had been directed against the teachers as the visible personification of the school. The boys could strike with less danger to themselves in that way, and it was great fun, they said, to hear the prin-

cial "talk morals." Like other boys they had an excess of energy, and no one had known how to drain it off through useful channels. Their teachers just tried to dam it up.

The educational problem, as we have said, is to secure the attention. Now, we have seen that if the group consciousness prevails, as it does when boys are ruled by the spirit of the gang, the attention remains fixed upon what they are planning to do. Boys will work persistently for weeks, and even months, trying to work out the details of what they have set before themselves. If this same concentration could be fixed upon the work of the school, pedagogical troubles would largely disappear. Why is it so difficult to produce this educational attitude of mind? What is the difference between the two sorts of occupations?

Educators seek to secure attention for certain ideas which make for growth, and the difficulty is that these ideas, intended as they are to prepare children for the future rather than the present, are likely to represent types of experience beyond the children's stage of development. One cannot avoid a certain sympathy with an eleven-year-old girl who, according to her teacher, refused to try to find how many times a bucket must be filled to empty a circular well, the height and bottom radius of which were given, together

with the height and radii of the bucket, on the ground that no one but a fool would try to empty a well in that way. To give attention to ideas whose value is a future asset requires rejection of those of present significance, and the mind refuses to make this sacrifice unless convinced of a more deserving claim. This is the reason for our unwillingness to listen to a friend when we are hurrying to a train.

Children sacrifice the present for the future less willingly than adults because the events of the moment are full of meaning to them and the future has little significance. Progress in civilization has been conditioned by the substitution of future values for present gratification, and it is unreasonable to expect children who live in the same freedom from care as savages to give anxious thought for the morrow. It would seem, then, that the ideas for which teachers seek to gain the attention should be expressed in terms of present values to the child. They must in some way be identified with the things he wishes to do. They must have present worth.

To go a step further, attention results from the mind's acquiescence in the focal presence of a particular idea or group of ideas. This is true whether the attention be of the so-called voluntary or involuntary variety, since the only differ-

ence between the two lies in the complexity of the former. In "voluntary" attention more than one attraction is offered, and, each presenting inducements, the mind receives the one with more or less consciousness of what it has lost in giving up the other. This consciousness of deprivation, together with certain muscular sensations, probably makes up the feeling of effort which has caused this form of attention to be popularly thought active. Attention means an arrangement of the content of consciousness which gives clearness to one idea or group of ideas and produces comparative though not equal obscurity of the others. Change of attention requires a redistribution of the content, and this is accompanied by a rearrangement of clearness. The change may be partial or complete, depending upon the operating causes and upon the condition of the mind.

It is the radical rearrangement of the content of consciousness demanded by modern school methods to which children organically object. And the better the stuff they have in them the more vigorous is their resistance. Teachers insist that their pupils reorganize their minds at once. The thoughts which constitute childhood must be laid aside. The social relations that exist among them because they are living a primitive life are to be forgotten, and, in place of both, adult conceptions

are to be substituted. This complete destruction of their childish ideas is what children resist. They refuse to attend to the school-work because the act of attending means the annihilation of thoughts and things which seem to them of supreme importance. The place for the emphasis of their thoughts varies with their age, and a knowledge of these changes constitutes an important branch of child study.

But the school and social ideals may become the things to which children give attention when these duties, to use the phrase of adults, grow out of their own thoughts and social relations. Under these conditions there is no mental break. The pupils are not told either directly or by implication that their way of looking at things is altogether wrong. Their thoughts are directed into other channels which offer views quite as consistent with their racial impulses as did the earlier course. In other words, their childish ways of acting are utilized for new purposes. An illustration will make the method clearer.

It was the season for pea-shooters and the boys were making the most of it. No one was safe when passing the school. The boys stood in a crowd so as to hide the marksmen and a shout of exultation, followed by the disappearance of the gang, signalled a successful shot at a passer-by.

The principal was in despair. He talked to the boys individually and in groups, and punished without fear or favor any who were caught. But he made no headway. Yet he was not unpopular. Indeed, the boys pronounced him the best of all their teachers. And they agreed that he was strictly fair. But the pea-shooting continued, and the residents grew more angry.

A friend was visiting the principal. His introduction to the school was a pea in the corner of his eye. It was not a large pea, but it was aimed on the efficiency plan and it did its work. The stranger made some remarks which seemed appropriate to the occasion and went into the building to soothe his eye and his feelings. While he was bathing the former an idea came to him. The boys, he said to himself, were shooting peas for want of something better to do. And they were shooting at people because they were the most available and interesting targets. There was the element of contest, of warfare, in it. Why not substitute another form of the same racial activity? The plan was sufficiently harmless to be unobjectionable to the principal even though no authority could be found for it in the history of education.

The visitor made a short speech to the pupils at close of school. No reference was made to the

annoying pea-shooting. He merely invited the boys to meet him on the playground the next morning, which was Saturday, and compete in archery. The principal stopped one of the boys as he was passing out and introduced him to the stranger. This was the leader of the rougher group in the school. Of course this part of the programme had been arranged beforehand, at the suggestion of the visitor, because the principal did not believe that the boys would accept the invitation. The leader was asked if he would help make a target. Naturally he was pleased at the honor. What boy would not be? Putting up the target did not take long, but two hours were spent in finishing a bow and a couple of arrows. Meanwhile the two had become fast friends, and when the boy was asked on leaving whether he thought the others would come, he replied: "Leave that to me."

The next day at the appointed time the boys came in groups as though for mutual support in the rather novel experience. They stood around with their hands in their pockets in much the same embarrassment as is noticed at a children's party. But their leader ordered them around like galley slaves, and so they soon began to feel quite natural. At the close of the morning's sport, which all enjoyed immensely, some one



proposed that they organize a bow and arrow club. No one knew just where the idea started. The leader made the suggestion and, with the obedience which boys always show on the playground, they agreed that it would be splendid.

The manual-training department was kept busy for the following week making bows and arrows. The children went at it very differently from the way in which they had worked at the things assigned by their teachers and which had no special meaning for them.

What happened to the pea-shooters? They were given to the small boys. But these little fellows, again, did not find them so interesting as before. They also wanted to shoot arrows at targets.

Judge Lindsey has shown how the actions of boys may be radically altered in various lines without doing violence to their own social or gang conceptions of duty.

"In a certain suburb of Denver," he relates, "where the smelters are located and there are a great many cheap saloons selling bad liquor and tobacco to children, two celebrated gangs brought to the juvenile court for dangerous forms of rowdyism and lawlessness not only completely suppressed every serious objectionable feature among themselves, but also went after the men who were

selling liquor and tobacco to boys. They prosecuted and sent several to jail, and did more to stop the use of tobacco and liquor among boys in that neighborhood than the police department or civil authorities had done in the history of the town.”<sup>1</sup> The members of the same gangs also prosecuted men for selling firearms to children, for purchasing stolen property, and for circulating obscene literature. Yet these were the lads who had been making the trouble in that neighborhood, who had been stealing the property which the junk-dealers bought, and who were among the customers for the firearms and immoral literature.

If a gang can be made to suppress its own lawlessness and become the protectors of those upon whom it has been preying, what limit is there to the utilization of its enthusiasm and its spirit? This suppression of lawlessness, however, was not accomplished by violating the ethics of the gang, but rather by giving to these impulses a more universal social outlet. And this, after all, is what constitutes moral training. The gang is a close social corporation. The action of its members toward one another is often exemplary. Kindness, truthfulness, and helpfulness would

<sup>1</sup> “The Problem of the Children,” “Report of the Juvenile Court of Denver, 1904,” pp. 107-108.

leave little to be desired, if these virtues were not so narrowly restricted in their application. But outsiders are not included among the beneficiaries. Now, it is the extension of the point of view of the gang—the enlargement of its membership to include the greater social group which has been shut out and classed among its enemies—that is the first task of those engaged in training boys. When this is accomplished a large proportion of the school troubles disappear because they have originated in the traditional opposition of the school-master to the impulses which have all the sanction of racial passion.

But there is still another way in which Judge Lindsey has socialized the wayward lads who have come before his court, without destroying the ethical concepts of childhood. Tale-bearing we have found to be abhorrent to boys. To ask those who are caught to reveal the names of their associates in the crimes and misdemeanors would be destructive of their social growth, because diplomatic relations between teachers and pupils would at once be broken off. But “in the ‘snitching bee’ conducted in my chambers around my table, after the boys became friendly,” says Judge Lindsey, “they did not tell the names of the boys they knew to be doing the same thing. They went back to the school and within the next day

or so returned to my chambers with sixteen more. These sixteen boys, from a very respectable school in a respectable neighborhood, brought to me some twenty or thirty dollars' worth of stolen trinkets, principally agate marbles, leather purses and bags, which they use for carrying their marbles. They voluntarily joined the delinquent list of probationers."

"Another most interesting case of this character was one in which the party caught numbered four, and these four rounded up forty-four others."<sup>1</sup> In still another case six or seven were caught and these brought in fifty-two others. "It has been about two years since these happenings, and in none of the cases so far has there been either a complaint against any of the boys involved or against any other boys in the same neighborhood because of a repetition of the offence."

All of this means the enlargement of the social self. The gang, in its primitive state, is a restricted group. Its limited membership makes it decidedly individualistic in its ethical intent, while the opposition which its members feel toward other groups, and particularly toward society in the large, gives it an anti-social trend. The school is one of the opposing, if not hostile, organizations.

<sup>1</sup> Judge Lindsey, *op. cit.*, pp. 118-119.

The purposes of the school are therefore not its purposes, and whatever can be done to defeat the teacher is ethically justifiable.

We have shown by illustrations how this attitude of hostility may be changed to one of friendliness by giving a new turn to the primitive ideas and ideals of the children.

With this change in attitude toward the school organization comes an alteration in the attentive process. The things to which the teachers ask attention no longer represent the demands of "the opposition." The social world of the gang has been enlarged, and this extension of its world of fellowship calls for recognition by its members of the claims of the larger group. The content of the minds of the boys has been changed, but not by suppressing their native impulses. What they have believed is still true, but it has received a larger, more universal meaning. Their racial instincts are still allowed to run their course; only the channel has been deepened and directed with intelligence, instead of shifting aimlessly with the promptings of inherited savage impulses.

Sometimes, indeed, these inherited instincts are best directed by first giving them freedom under limited control. In this way the boy gradually becomes accustomed to restraint though he would break the rope were he pulled up short. This

seems to have been the case with an habitual run-away who came under Judge Lindsey after eighteen months in a reform school had failed to cure him of his *Wanderlust*.

"I succeeded in getting him to come and tell me when he was going to run away," says Judge Lindsey.<sup>1</sup> "He came one day as though possessed with a fever and said he must 'take a ride.' I deliberately gave him permission to 'bum his way' to Colorado Springs on condition that he would go no farther and would come back within a week. I knew that he was fully capable of going to California or the Gulf of Mexico, whither he had often 'taken a ride.' Of course I took chances, but I took an equally desperate chance if I returned him to the reform school, which had failed to cure the malady. The boy was as good as his word, and after two experiences of this kind, now two years ago, he has ceased to be a 'bum' and is in every way promising."

This was not an extreme case. Extreme and radical are words applied to actions and beliefs which do not fit into our system of ideas. The boy was living his racial life, just like other virile children. But with him the primitive centred in the desire to roam. If he could have been taken out into the woods, his craving to wander might

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 98-99.

have been satisfied; but shutting him up only intensified the longing. Much of the excitement of escapades comes from the restraint that boys meet. Resistance always generates opposition. A child's wants are suggested by the situation in which he is placed. Let him feel that he can do as he wishes and he is very likely to seek what you desire. He is, at least, in a receptive, adaptive attitude. But under close restraint he is restive and seizes every chance to break away.

The gang offers the best opportunity to control boys because the self of each member is merged in the larger self of the group. For this reason its social life is the entrance to the still larger, more universal social relationships of the work-a-day world. Besides, action is unified so that it is not necessary to convince individuals and, in addition, suggestions are contagious in a crowd.

Like adults, boys have various selves, and they always use the one that fits the occasion. Experience has made them skilful in feats of rapid mental contortion. The same boy is obstinate in school, a bully with the younger set and meek among the members of his gang. He selects the actions which he has found useful. When they fail to be serviceable he is quick to change.

At the grammar and high school age, boys

are individualistic and anarchistic toward their teachers, but socialistic in their own group. This contradictory personality is due to the fact that they are just emerging from the individualism of early childhood. The gang is a stern school of altruism. The reason for this is the diversity of interests. The group offers a variety of ideas, and the one selected is less individually selfish in proportion as it partakes of the spirit of the group. Children are intolerant of personal self-seekers, and the group sentiment dominates partly because of its larger, more universal worth. It meets the needs of individuals through its adaptiveness to the wants of the entire group. What the group decides is for its good the individual accepts. In this way the group sentiment directs and rules the attention of those who contribute to its spirit. The members must work together and this forces concessions. Individualism crops out at times, and a boy may break away, but he invariably returns and begs to be taken back at any cost to his independence. Except in rare instances, boys cannot endure isolation.

There are several reasons why boys are most accessible through the gang. We have already indicated that the members are swayed at the moment by a single impulse. What that impulse shall be depends upon the prevailing suggestion.



Gangs possess the strength and weakness of a psychological crowd. They are more likely to be destructive on account of inherited savage instincts and because reason seldom obtains a hearing. Besides, acts in which boys dare not engage alone they will do *en masse*. The gang hides individuals, and courage rises in proportion to the chance of concealment. Gangs, however, may be constructive. Here is where the leader is important.

The leader of the gang is free from many of the limitations of his followers. They have their reputations to make. He has made his. What any set expects of its members is a powerful stimulus to activity in that direction. But the leader does not need to fight, because it was by proof of his superior prowess that he won his position. Escapades are comparatively unimportant to him, since he has engaged in so many that his companions know that he has the "nerve." Of course he will engage in them if nothing better comes his way, but he is conscious of the importance of his leadership and these acts are a little plebeian for a ruler. To look upon them with indifference gives him a feeling of superiority. So he is more inclined to play the part of judge or arbiter. He likes to give the impression of having outgrown the puerile thoughts of those who look up to him for guidance. The reason why he acts less fre-

quently on this feeling is that nothing better is suggested. Teachers do not treat him as a ruler. They try to suppress him, and that is mortifying. So he defends his authority in the only way in which he has had any experience.

The time when the biggest boy in the school must be whipped in order to demonstrate that the teacher, and not he, is in control, has passed; but he is still subjected to all sorts of humiliating penalties. Naturally, he must do something to maintain his prestige among his followers, and the secret revolts which he instigates are the weapons that are always used by the oppressed when they know that they are too weak for open resistance.

We have said that the gang enlarges the self of its members. Its code of ethics we found to be an expression of the emerging social self. But the leader displays quite a different sort of self from that of his followers. They may aggress upon one another, but toward him they are obedient. He, on the contrary, is never submissive. His resistance varies, of course, with the situation in which he finds himself. In the presence of his teachers he may even appear subdued, but that is only the diplomacy of one who is playing for time.

The leader, however, possesses certain qualities

which, joined with his leadership, make him pre-eminently the point of social growth of the gang. The very fact of his leadership and his feeling that he is the protector of his followers gives him a social self which is in advance of that of his subordinates.

We remarked a few moments ago that the leader likes to appear superior to his associates, and that the reason for his engaging in the acts through which he gained his pre-eminence is his incapacity for social inventions. His feeling of leadership makes him anxious for new sources of glory, but originality is always limited by experience and the opportunities of boys are restricted. This is the teacher's chance.

Boys are anxious for novel experiences. Indeed, they devote most of their energy to finding them. That is the trouble. If they were satisfied with what is given, they could be easily directed, but with all their restlessness in inaction they are excessively particular about the way in which the experience is offered. The gang has its own parliamentary rules. This is not the name which the members give to their usage, but that is what it is. The business must be introduced in the proper way and this is where most teachers fail. They know that they have something good, and they cannot understand why the children do

not become enthusiastic. The cause of the indifference is seen in the ease with which an occasional teacher secures attention to his work when others fail. For example, all school-masters will agree that theme-writing is one of the bores of the trade. But the writer knows one school in which the children take to it as they do to skating, and the result is a quality of work rarely attained in any school. The difference is that the teacher of these youngsters plays according to the rules of the game. He recognizes the gang and introduces his business according to its unwritten law.

It is obvious that boys many times may act as a gang without any visible organization. Wherever there is a leader the gang spirit prevails. And they usually have a leader.

The leader of the group is approachable. The reason has already been given. He takes his leadership seriously. His self is as variable as that of his subordinates, but it is made of different stuff. The very fact that he rules the entire band gives him a feeling of responsibility toward each member. So far as this feeling goes it is social. Ordinarily it is limited to managing the tribal activities, to demanding fair play, and to protecting the weak from the aggressions of the strong. It is, however, capable of extension.

The fact that the leader is managing things in a small field makes him anxious for larger exploits, and the seriousness with which he thinks of his authority exposes him to the influence of suggestion. The problem, therefore, is to enlarge the activities of the gang so that they may include things which have wider social import. The leader is ready for this change because he is surfeited with his own limited inventions. This is what has been done through the Boy Scouts, the Knights of King Arthur, and in the local gangs, whose transformation into social forces has been described in this and other chapters.

Let us now return to our original problem—the use of these racial instincts in securing the attention for things and actions that are educational.

Our earlier illustrations have shown that children are rarely inattentive to work which they think their own. But the group sentiment is always active in determining what ideas shall occupy the focus of consciousness. To remain members of the group, however, boys must attend to the business which it assigns. Making children feel that the work is theirs and not the teacher's means, then, securing the attention. This the schools have failed to do, and as a result teachers are continually working against the resistance of

the group consciousness. The school is composed of two opposing forces: the one, the teacher, trying to win attention by creating factitious interests, and the other, the children, momentarily attracted by these devices but always watchful of a chance to assert their social selves.

The efficiency of the energy released by group sentiment is seen in the results accomplished under the name of play. It is not the nature of the activity that distinguishes work from play so much as the mental attitude assumed toward the occupation. We have seen that the same subjects of study are tedious under the ordinary class method and interesting when made the order of business in a club of the members of the class of which the teacher is an integral but inconspicuous part. The club idea appeals to the racial instincts of love of glory—showing off—and personal competition, both of which are elements in the group sentiment. There is no lack of attention here.

The utilization of the racial instincts in securing attention to educative ideas has been resisted by school men largely because of the educational dogma of the value of effort. Effort has been greatly overworked of late. Attention does its best work when the feeling of effort is wanting. Effort indicates resistance or strain, and accom-

panies inefficient attention. As we become proficient in our work, it decreases and finally disappears entirely. The reverence for effort has arisen in the misapprehension of the relation of feelings to attention, and in the belief that strain has some occult pedagogical value. It is intensity of thought which counts in mental development. The feeling of effort adds no value to the educative process. Consciousness of strain indicates imperfect attention with undue prominence of muscular sensations or friction. The friction may be caused by the novelty of the ideas, by bodily discomfort, as in the strains due to reflex neuroses,<sup>1</sup> or by temporary mental incongruity, as in the case of an adult who has heard bad news. With children the same effect is produced by the resistance and inhibitions caused by racial impulses. If the incongruity is permanent because of inability to give the ideas an orderly arrangement among the dominant thoughts and feelings of the learner, their educational value is at least doubtful.

Attention, then, is determined by past and present states of consciousness. In childhood the stuff out of which these mental states are made is largely racial and social, as typified by the spirit of the gang, and continued attention can

<sup>1</sup> "Mind in the Making," by Edgar James Swift, p. 116.

be secured only by creating educational situations in which the school consciousness loses its identity in the racial and social consciousness of the children.



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE RELEASE OF MENTAL FORCES

IN an earlier chapter we have seen that children respond with great sensitiveness to their surroundings, thus revealing a characteristic common to all living organisms—that of adaptation to environment. Let us carry the biological analogy still further to show that the more highly developed the animal the greater the flexibility of response to given stimuli. This background of race history should clarify much that has been said concerning the imperative necessity of creating an environment for the child which shall not only keep pace with his racial and neural growth, but which shall be freed from obstacles to growth.

Since the time of Darwin, it has been a matter of common scientific knowledge that animals and plants may undergo such great changes as to make it often difficult, if not impossible, to trace their origin. The significant fact, however, as we have already seen, is the amazing extent to which this adaptation may be directed through control over the environment. Klebs,<sup>1</sup> in explaining the re-

<sup>1</sup> *Jahrbücher für wissenschaftliche Botanik*, vol. 42, p. 155.

markable changes which have been produced in plants by himself and others, assumes that each plant has a definite structure capable of variation within certain limits which are, nevertheless, wide enough to permit striking alterations in the nature of the plant. These variations are the result, Klebs tells us, of latent potentialities which are actualized by suitable stimuli. "When we become sufficiently acquainted with the external conditions appropriate to a given variation and can apply them practically, the variations," he says, "must necessarily occur."<sup>1</sup> Now, this quality of adaptation is much more characteristic of man than of plants or lower animals. Indeed, the lower we go in the scale of living organisms the more reasonable is our surprise at the manifestation of extreme degrees of adaptation, for the life habits of plants depend primarily upon their structure, and readaptation of structure is more difficult than physiological adaptation. While it is doubtless as correct to speak of physiological states in plants as in the lower animals, the nuclei and protoplasmic threads which act respectively as nerve cells and fibres in the former can hardly serve so efficiently as even the most elementary nerve cells and fibres of animals. We should therefore expect adaptation to be more

<sup>1</sup> *Op cit.*, p. 303.

limited in range the lower the animal, and in plants we should look for still more restricted possibilities. This seems to be Jennings's view when he says, "in the higher animals, and especially in man, the essential features in behavior depend very largely on the life history of the individual; in other words, upon the present physiological condition of the individual, as determined by the stimuli it has received and the reactions it has performed. But in this respect the higher animals do not differ in principle, but only in degree, from the lower organisms. . . ." <sup>1</sup> Francis Darwin evidently holds the same opinion when he says concerning Jennings's statement: "I venture to believe that this is true of plants as well as of animals, and that it is further broadly true not only of physiological behavior but of the changes that are classed as morphological," <sup>2</sup> i. e., structural. But the story does not end here, for Jennings has shown that even among the lower organisms "behavior is not, as a rule, on the tropism plan—a set, forced method of reacting to each particular agent—but takes place in a much more flexible, less directly machine-like way, by the method of trial and error." <sup>3</sup>

#### Observation of more highly organized animals

<sup>1</sup> "Contributions to the Study of the Behavior of Lower Organisms," p. 124.

<sup>2</sup> *Science*, vol. 28, 1908, p. 359.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 252.

reveals greater flexibility in actions. A few instances will show the sort of change which takes place.

English sparrows "are able to modify their habits readily. They discriminate small differences in the apparatus (by which their intelligence is tested) and adjust their actions accordingly."<sup>1</sup>

"The cowbird learns to distinguish between different designs—the three horizontal black lines on one card to be distinguished from a blank card, and a card marked with a black diamond from a blank card." The one of which we are speaking "also showed that she was learning to distinguish the triangle."<sup>2</sup>

A blind rat with which Willard S. Small was experimenting selected a new and shorter path with little hesitation. "After the second trial he rarely went astray. . . . The old habit (of following the longer route with which he had been familiar for weeks) was quickly broken, and a new, more advantageous one established. This preference for the shorter path is difficult to explain except upon the supposition that the path is known as shorter. . . . Unless the advantage of the new path over the old is known in some way,

<sup>1</sup> "A Preliminary Study of the Psychology of the English Sparrow," by James P. Porter, *American Journal of Psychology*, vol. 15, p. 346.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, vol. 17, pp. 269-270.

the old habit would persist simply in virtue of its own inertia." <sup>1</sup>

Evidently among higher species the machine element in the response of animals to their environment becomes less noticeable. The questions regarding behavior which have been asked with reference to the lower forms were: "Is any other factor besides the mechanical organization of the animal operative in the response?" "Does their behavior differ essentially from that of the plants whose roots grow down into the earth and whose stem seeks the light?" The question is now changed to: "How much intelligence is involved in the actions of these animals?" "Are they able to imitate in the sense of profiting from the experience of one another?"

Still higher in the animal scale the problem again changes. "Do animals reason?" is the way in which the question is now put. It is not the purpose of the writer to discuss this perplexing problem. The correctness of one view or the other is unessential here. The important fact is that the actions of higher animals cause the question to be seriously asked. The problem of intelligence evidently changes as we ascend the animal series. A few instances from the higher animals may be cited for further illustration.

<sup>1</sup> "Experimental Studies of the Mental Processes of the Rat," by Willard S. Small, *American Journal of Psychology*, vol. 12, p. 238.

"Roger came to us three years ago, a forlorn and hopeless-looking puppy," says the owner.<sup>1</sup> "He was a full-blooded mongrel of the cocker-spaniel persuasion. His thick black coat was rough and dirty and his tail was habitually between his legs. He had been taken into two homes only to be turned out again as utterly 'impossible.'" After kind treatment had brought back Roger's self-respect his education was begun. He received about ten minutes' training each day for two years. At the end of that time "he could spell anything which I could spell without being taught. I asked for Constantinople, phthisic, pneumonia, and for problems like  $2 \times 3 + 4 \div 2 - 1$ . He never made a mistake. Fractions presented no difficulties to him. He selected colors correctly the first time he saw them and made change as quickly as any cashier." This is the statement of the owner.

Let us now turn to Dr. Yerkes's account of the dog:

"I watched intently everything that dog and trainer did, with the discouraging result that I failed to discover anything which could account for the large proportion of correct answers which were given. . . . I am free to say that at the end of this first performance I was deeply interested

<sup>1</sup> *Century Magazine*, vol. 53, p. 598.

in what I had seen, and not a little puzzled by it. The dog had answered questions remarkably well. He had added, subtracted, spelled, and done a number of his pretty little tricks with a degree of accuracy which compelled admiration."<sup>1</sup> The result of later investigation convinced Dr. Yerkes that Roger's "answers are dictated by slight voluntary and involuntary movements of his trainer, and not by recognition of the letters and numbers and intelligent use of them to answer questions. . . . I must add, however, that these movements are not readily seen by the observer when Roger is in practice and does his best. It is highly probable that the dog's visual sensitiveness to movement is greater than ours."

Yerkes's conclusions agree with those reached in the investigation of "Der kluge Hans," the German horse whose wonderful feats in reading, spelling, giving the names of those to whom he had been introduced, and solving complex arithmetical problems involving fractions were heralded round the world a few years ago. Pfungst<sup>2</sup> discovered that clever Hans could not reply correctly to questions when the answers were unknown to the questioner. Fraud was eliminated by the fact that the horse answered correctly questions

<sup>1</sup> "The Behavior of Roger," by Robert M. Yerkes, *Century Magazine*, vol. 53, p. 602.

<sup>2</sup> "Das Pferd des Herrn v. Osten," by Oscar Pfungst.

put by the investigator and by others who were only interested in the psychological aspects of the performance. The success of the investigator in obtaining correct answers also proved that the movements which served Hans as a cue were *involuntary* movements of the head, body, and limbs, accompanying intense attention. These movements, which the spectators did not detect, were observed by the horse and translated into appropriate actions. So he could spell any word which the questioner could spell, or give the answer of difficult problems in arithmetic by pawing with his hoof according to the language code which he had been taught. But let us now turn to an even more remarkable exhibition of mental flexibility, this time in the animal closest to man.

"Peter" is a chimpanzee whose intelligence was recently tested in the psychological laboratory of the University of Pennsylvania. He had been under training for show purposes during two and a half years. It will be sufficient for our present purpose to cite a few of his actions under conditions requiring considerable selective attention and discrimination.

Peter had been accustomed to lock and unlock an old-fashioned padlock with a large key. Dr. Witmer gave him a smaller one with a thin bar bent like a staple which must be inserted at the



end of the padlock and pushed home when the lock was to be closed. The keyhole was at the end opposite the staple-like bar. "The key was a small one," says Dr. Witmer,<sup>1</sup> "difficult to insert and difficult to turn after it had been inserted. As soon as Peter saw this lock, it absorbed his entire attention. . . . I unlocked it for him and took out the staple attachment. I put the staple back and locked it, withdrawing the key. I was about to reinsert the key, thinking it too difficult a test to start him with, when he reached for the key, and turning the lock into the correct position, promptly inserted it and unlocked it more rapidly than I had done a moment before. He then pulled out the staple with a look I cannot but term triumphant, expressing, 'There! you see I have done it.' I then told him to put the staple back and lock it. He inserted one prong of ~~the staple~~, but unfortunately had not solved the problem of putting the two prongs in at once. He kept turning the staple around, but it would not go into place. . . . I then employed a test which demonstrated his intelligence most clearly. Holding the lock before him, I pulled the staple slowly out, moved it several inches away, and reinserted it. I repeated this perform-

<sup>1</sup> "A Monkey with a Mind," by Lightner Witmer, *Psychological Clinic*, vol. 3, p. 188.

ance two or three times and then passed the lock to Peter. He seized it eagerly, slowly and carefully pulled out the staple until it was not more than a quarter of an inch beyond the lock, and then carefully reinserted it in place, shoving it home with a smack of his hand. There could be no doubt that he appreciated the danger of losing the combination and was taking no chances on getting the staple too far away from the body of the lock. He then turned the key in the lock and at my verbal request handed the lock back to me."

Perhaps the most remarkable of Peter's skilful acts was the discernment which he displayed in the use of the hammer and screw-driver. "A hammer and a piece of board on which were some nails and screws were given him. The hammer had a reversible head, a round one for buffing and a flat one for driving nails. It differed from the hammer which I saw him use at a private interview in the theatre, and probably was unlike any that he had ever seen. I gave him the hammer in such a way that when he grasped it in his hand he held it in position for striking with the round head. Hesitating a moment, he brought the round head to his mouth, felt it with his lips, turned the head about, felt the flat end, and instantly proceeded to drive several nails into the

board with the proper head. He never mistook a screw for a nail." He was then handed a screw instead of a nail. "He stuck the screw into a small hole in the board and at once selected a screw-driver, paying no attention whatever to the hammer lying on the table. . . . There were three screw-drivers on the table, and he first picked out a medium-sized one, which was a little too large for the purpose. He next tried the smallest one and made several turns of the screw, always turning the screw-driver in the right direction. He did this as a child might do it, or an adult not expert in handling tools."

Finally, Dr. Witmer tested Peter's ability to imitate simple writing. "I drew forward a black-board the writing surface of which he could easily reach when standing upon the table. He took a piece of chalk eagerly and before I had made any mark upon the board, began to scrawl in a corner of it. I took the chalk from him and said, 'Peter, I want you to do this,' and rapidly made the letter W in four strokes. Peter's attention had not been fully given while I made the letter. He took the chalk and scrawled beneath in much the same manner as he had done before. I picked up another piece of chalk and said, 'Now look, this is what I want you to do,' and traced another W over the one which I had just drawn.

Peter watched the operation intently, then with the chalk in his hand he quickly made four movements and drew a fairly perfect letter W beneath the W which I had traced. . . . I asked him to try again, and he made at some distance from the first letter another W, somewhat less perfectly formed."

As has already been said, it is unessential for our present purposes whether Roger and Peter "reasoned" or not. The important fact is their ability to construct new experiences—to adapt themselves to situations belonging to a higher level of life. *Amoebæ* and *Paramecia*, according to Jennings, use the "trial-and-error" method. Previously acquired experience counts with them for nothing. The rats tested by Small followed the same method, but having hit upon a successful way they retain it. They do not always retrace the old, useless reactions, as do the *Amoebæ* and *Paramecia*, until they again happen by chance upon the successful response. But Small found no evidence that his rats "learned to do anything by seeing another do it—the purposive association of another's action with a desired end." In the case of Roger and Peter, however, purposive imitation is evident. Indeed, Roger, like "*Der kluge Hans*," not only imitated, but in addition quite clearly made inferences from involuntary

movements of his teachers, while Peter imitated writing and exercised discriminative judgment in his selection of tools.

When one studies the nervous system of the animals of which we have been speaking, it is found that the change of questions regarding their mentality comes with improvement in nervous structure. Some of the organisms which Jennings investigated have no nervous system. The others possess only the most rudimentary sort. As differentiation in internal organization proceeds, the problem of intelligence arises and it becomes increasingly prominent as the nervous mechanism grows more complex.

Evidently, then, flexibility in response to stimuli increases with the degree of development of the animal, and in man we find the greatest variety of possible adaptations. Further, as has been shown by Herder and, again, by John Fisk, the lengthened period of infancy in man was imperative that he might meet the increasing and varying demands of his environment for new adaptations.

The flexibility of this period is what gives teachers their chance. The "period of infancy" is only another term for the formative period which extends through childhood, and the school task, as we have seen, is not merely to teach,

but to furnish situations which shall stimulate reactions leading to mental and moral growth. The problem is therefore a constructive one in the calculation of which all the racial and individual characteristics of the children must be reckoned with.

Our brief survey of some of the changes which occur in the evolution of animals shows that training and education should be consistent with the stage of growth which the nervous system has attained, and that they should change with the progress of internal organization. In the case of infants this is done, though apparently less from intelligence than because nothing else is possible. At the beginning of the school age, again, some progress has been made in the method employed. A few of the contributions to child psychology have been incorporated in school practice. But here our appreciation must end. Throughout the remainder of the school course, the methods followed are as though the nervous system, and with it the mind, made no further progress. On the intellectual side, memory and imitation absorb the attention of teachers, and in conduct the appeal continues to be made to motives of earlier childhood. For the schools, the boy never becomes a reasoning creature. Rules and facts make up the content of every subject. Even laboratory

work is so arranged that the best marks may be secured through memory and imitation. When the teacher does not perform the experiments for the class, he prepares such explicit directions that the pupils are relieved of the labor of thinking. This is first-class chimpanzee education, and the only qualification which Peter lacks to complete his studies for graduation is the ability to read and to understand spoken language. So far as imitation is concerned, he can meet the requirements. Naturally boys feel much the same sort of organic resistance to perpetuating these childhood methods that they show toward continuing to wear short trousers. They do not fit their age. So incorrigibility and truancy, with the accompanying retardation, follow.

Our problem of breaking down the mental resistance of children to work and of releasing their mental forces has been simplified by investigations in the changes which boys undergo during the school period. Those who have had much to do with boys from twelve to sixteen years of age have found the social, co-operative factor about the strongest element in their lives. They may be thoroughly obtuse to motives which appeal to adults, but, as has been shown in earlier chapters, they are never oblivious of the demands of their own group. They work with untiring vigor to

accomplish what their gang has put upon them. Here, then, we seem to have the key to the situation—to appropriate some of the group enthusiasm for the advancement of learning among boys. After all, the irresistible longing to grapple with situations and to win, is the central purpose of school training. Under these circumstances knowledge comes incidentally and in abundance, because it is essential to what the children are doing.

Fortunately, the conditions which develop these habits of action are identical with those to which children respond with the greatest zest. They revel in problems to work out, singly or in groups, by investigation or conference, when once the group spirit has been aroused. If the entire responsibility for success or failure rests with leaders whom the children have selected, so much the better, since leaders from among themselves are relentless in their demands. This sort of work furnishes a range of adaptation, so far as studies are concerned, sufficiently wide and flexible to meet the requirements of each child. The appeal to the instincts of children to organize and direct the things that concern themselves (the group-activity impulses), to investigate (curiosity), supplies a powerful incentive to work. Knowledge and morality take care of themselves. The former is acquired by each one doing his



share of the common labor, and moral action is demanded by the ethics of fair play and by the intolerance of children for shirking and cheating. Demolins has shown how powerful these incentives to morality are in l'École des Roches. "The school," he says, "is entrusted to the children. It is their affair; they have the responsibility for order and behavior. The confidence which we feel in them and the respect which we show develop in turn self-reliance and respect for themselves."<sup>1</sup>

At Abbotsholme, in England, the model for l'École des Roches, the native impulse of children to participate in the management of what they do, is, again, the moving force in the acquisition of knowledge as well as of habits of self-control. Here teachers and pupils work together, study together, and participate equally in the discussion of the ways and means of accomplishing what they set before themselves. The difference between work and play does not arise, because no distinction is made. Each appeals to the same racial impulse to group action in which all have equal share and interest. The head-master of Abbotsholme, Mr. Cecil Reddie, speaking of himself and his associates at the beginning of their career as teachers, when they were following the

<sup>1</sup> "L'Education nouvelle," par Edmond Demolins.

traditional methods of the school, says: "On becoming a school-master, the first thing we found was that the mere fact of being a teacher by profession raised an immense wall, unknown before, between us and our pupils."<sup>1</sup> Now, however, "the antagonism which usually exists in a school between boys and masters has been avoided by . . . co-operation and participation. Masters and pupils co-operate together and share in the result—an expanded life for all. 'My learning is playing and my playing is learning,' as the old Dutch song says, finds here its practical realization, for in this school even the recreation has to some extent a utilitarian aspect."<sup>2</sup>

I am aware that all teachers will maintain that they co-operate with the children in their school. This claim is a part of the pedagogical cant. But when a pedantic teacher joins his pupils in their activities his feeling of superiority and his condescension are so evident that the children would gladly be rid of him. At Abbotsholme, on the contrary, work and play are so intermingled that it is difficult to tell where one begins and the other ends. In the control and direction of the work, again, one could not easily distinguish master from pupil. Professional dignity, the pest of edu-

<sup>1</sup> "Abbotsholme," by Cecil Reddie, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Letter from J. C. Van Eyk, in "Abbotsholme," by Cecil Reddie, p. 102.

cation, has been thrown aside. And through it all recognition of racial instincts is fundamental.

The difference in efficiency produced by the school consciousness and the social consciousness is seen in an experiment which has been tried for several years in the McKinley High School at Saint Louis. The senior Latin class organized into a club for debates in Latin. Everything that is said in their meetings is spoken in Latin. Among the subjects which have been discussed are: "Constitutum sit: oratorem plus quam poetam valere"; "Constitutum sit: apud recentiores Romanos plus quam Graecos valuisse"; and "Constitutum sit: feminis dandum esse suffragium." The first speeches of each debate are carefully written out beforehand, but the closing reply of the leader of the affirmative is always written during the progress of the debate. The keenest interest is shown in these discussions, and the attitude of the entire class has changed. Suppose the task of writing an essay of half a dozen or more pages of Latin had been assigned. Any teacher knows the resistance which it would have aroused. Yet these boys and girls are eager to undertake the work because they are managing it and because the spirit of group emulation has been awakened.

The developmental value of stimuli depends

upon their relation to the needs of the individual. Among the lower animals the requirements of members of a species are the same. The individual has no consideration beyond that which profits his kind. It is only when we come to man that personal characteristics claim attention. The problem then changes. It is no longer forced adaptation to a given set of chance conditions wherever they may lead, but rather the development of the species through improving the persons who compose it.

The moment that individuals enter into our calculations, we must take account of the conditions which make for personal growth. Development is, of course, an exceedingly complex process. Many things which enter into it are beyond the control of teachers. Two contributing factors, however, are decidedly school matters. One of these is the content of the subjects of study, and the other the attitude of the pupils toward their work. Since the subject-matter of the curriculum, however significant it may be, has little developmental value without preliminary work in preparation for the recitation, the fundamental problem is to create in the pupils an attitude of mind similar to that which they have toward their own activities. It is folly to talk to them about the advantages of education, because they will not

believe you. They have not had the experience which is needed to appreciate knowledge. The school method is to force the pupils to study through fear of penalties or to coax them by rewards. Both of these plans have ignominiously failed. The first fosters deception and produces cowards. As regards the work accomplished under this incentive, at best only so much is done as self-protection prompts. The second incentive arouses merely an artificial interest. It makes little difference whether the rewards are of the ginger-bread variety or high marks. The desire to make a good appearance in recitations and examinations is the propelling force, and this leads to the sort of study that makes a brilliant showing for the moment, rather than to the spirit of inquiry and investigation which underlies real scholarship. Even if the reward is educative it fails to accomplish the desired purpose. Children of stamina revolt against the principle. In a school familiar to the writer the privilege of reading the books of the school library is reserved for those who study and are "good." The result is that few read. Those who do, try not to be caught in the act. One boy who had been the most troublesome and the least responsive was punished by being sent from the room, in accordance with the custom of the school. Happening into the library,

his teacher found him absorbed in a book. Conversation disclosed the fact that the boy wanted to read, but would not purchase the pleasure at the price of receiving favors for good conduct. So he purposely created disturbance that he might be sent from the room. He could then revel in reading.

If fear of punishment, hope of reward, and social obligations fail, the problem of producing a responsive attitude in the pupils seems to reduce itself to making situations which shall fit into the undeveloped thoughts and acts of children in such a way that study shall constitute an essential part of their activities. I am aware that this sounds vague when stated abstractly, but concrete illustrations have been given in earlier chapters. In pupil-governed schools, for example, the attitude of children toward their work is wholly altered. Study becomes a part of their organized self-control. Their lessons are no longer put upon them by the authority of their teacher, but instead are the work which they have tacitly agreed among themselves to do.

Pupil-government, however, is not the only method by which the educative attitude may be produced. Mr. Arthur Holmes has made an important contribution<sup>1</sup> to the possibilities of troub-

<sup>1</sup> "An Educational Experiment," *Psychological Clinic*, vol. 4, p. 155.

lesome, adolescent boys. The ages of his thirteen lads ranged from eleven to fifteen years, and among them all there was a choice variety of the wayward characteristics of spoiled, sullen, and lazy boys. "Six were moral delinquents, having stolen from their homes or other places." One other had been arrested, two were in charge of probation officers of the juvenile court, two others were backward and morally delinquent, and four were merely backward in their school-work. "In every case there was some reason which made the parents anxious to have their boys put under special training, the only exception being one normal boy, who accompanied his brother for the sake of companionship. . . . Taken as a whole a more difficult group of boys could scarcely be found, whether it was a question of pursuing the ordinary methods used in the public schools or any form of group or class work.

"The physical, intellectual, and temperamental disposition of each boy was taken into consideration and every effort made to correct any abnormalities, to take cognizance of any peculiarities, and to make adjustments of conditions to these where necessary. . . . The boys were to be held in the class, not by physical force, but by making an appeal to the adolescent interests which were assumed to be rich and varied enough to hold

them during the period of instruction and to serve as a basis for the control of conduct during their later lives. This was done by providing intellectual, physical, manual, and recreative studies and exercises under the leadership of persons experienced in dealing with boys. . . . The regular school books of the public schools of Philadelphia were used for the various studies in the class."

In manual training, "instead of beginning in the prescribed way with the fundamentals of tool handling and sloyd, each boy was presented with sufficient material to manufacture one object. He was given a concrete piece of work to do. His first attempt was the manufacture of a small windmill. . . . Furthermore, each boy was permitted to work as rapidly as he chose. Some of the boys finished their windmills long before the others, and these completed specimens became objects of emulation. . . . Though the work was primarily individual, it was at the same time social. All the boys were working upon the same thing. The constant interest in one another's progress, their interchange of questions, suggestions, tools and material emphasized the social factor and did as much as almost anything else to amalgamate the varied elements into a well-working whole.

"In addition to the handwork of manual train-



ing, there were daily physical exercises. The physical instruction consisted of swimming and regular gymnastic exercises in the university gymnasium, as well as games conducted both indoors and out.

"At first it was utterly impossible to secure anything like regularity in physical movements. There was no order, rhythm, or co-ordination among the different individuals. Each boy kept his own time and tried to follow the leader as best he could. . . . Squeers' famous class, as described by Dickens, hardly surpassed them for idiosyncrasies. . . . Gradually co-ordination began to develop in the class as a whole. They followed their leader more closely. . . . The conduct of the class as a whole became better; more attention was given to the instructor's orders, exercises were begun promptly and continued the required time. The boys improved in their treatment of each other. Slowly an *esprit de corps* crept in and before the six weeks were up a fairly well-organized gymnastic class had emerged from the first day's crowd of unmanageable fellows."

In baseball, "fair play was at a premium, and any trickery, dishonesty, or foul play met with immediate condemnation from the boys themselves."

As a result of the six weeks' experiment Holmes

proved that "boys, no matter how unmanageable by agencies already existing, can be interested and held to right activities. Not one boy was expelled from the class or sent home even for a time. Not one became a permanent truant or was compelled to return to school except by his own free will." And these "right activities" included "regular daily tasks difficult to accomplish and good in their results. . . . Confirmed truants will go to the right school, constant pilferers will restrain their thievishness, idlers will work, liars will tell the truth, if only they can be shown that natural instincts and legitimate desires can be best satisfied by upright moral conduct."

Another instance, somewhat different in type, will illustrate the wide range of the method which we are urging.

A young man fresh from college was placed in charge of about forty as determined boys and girls as ever combined to break in "the new teacher." Having received no instruction in the history of education, he was wholly unacquainted with the principles which enabled Pestalozzi to produce one of the most disorderly schools of which we have any record, and to have his name enrolled with honorable mention in the scroll of "educational reformers." The only "methods" with which the new teacher was familiar were

those used in the schools of his boyhood, which could hardly have been worse. Perhaps his ignorance was not altogether unfortunate. At any rate he had been spared, in his lack of training, some "model" pedagogical exhibitions which must seriously disturb the celestial bliss of those in whose names the performances are staged.

The necessity of maintaining discipline was almost the only "approved" pedagogical principle with which the new school-master was acquainted. That there is more than one sort of discipline, that "good order" is the condition in a group which produces the highest efficiency of the workers, and that a state which would be disorderly for one purpose is the most productive order for another, was as little known to him as observation indicates it is to many teachers to-day. So he set himself to the task of establishing discipline as a preliminary to teaching.

Meanwhile his training in pedagogy was progressing. The teachers' meetings were a great help. They were a kind of general "complainery" where all the faults of all the children were always discussed. It did not occur to any of the teachers at that time that such general and continuous complaints indicated a cause in themselves. They were serious and conscientious, but their conviction was always in evidence that the pupils

were unappreciative of the splendid privilege of being under their instruction. And all the time they were dragging the children through their daily tasks like convict laborers at a contract price. Yet they wondered why the vivacious youngsters were in a continual state of suppressed revolt.

These experience meetings afforded the teachers a great deal of pedagogical consolation. This comfort came chiefly from the consciousness that others were having like troubles with the same children, and this assurance justified the conceit in each that he was doing things in the right way. The part of the symposium which consisted of a running commentary on the pupils was never slighted, and afterward as much of the time as was left was given to educational questions of larger import.

By this time the new teacher was obtaining some little knowledge of the history of education. One of the striking facts in the meetings, as well as in the teachers' institutes which he attended, was the manifest reverence for authority and the fluent use of language formulæ which seemed to have no very definite meaning to those who uttered them. They were evidently expressions which had been heard and repeated so many times that they rolled out glibly when the right

string was pulled. Feeling that his ignorance of the subject and lack of experience called for an inquiring attitude of mind, the new teacher sometimes asked what the expressions meant and why they should be accepted. The answer was always the same. Pestalozzi, Froebel, or Herbart said so.

Meanwhile efforts to maintain discipline had succeeded, as far at least as concerned visible disorder. The teacher, however, was continually reminded of the observation that the eyes of some photographs follow one in every direction as one passes in front of them. The only difference was that, in his school, the eyes stealthily followed him to the rear of the room, a feat of which photographs, so far as he could discover, are incapable.

When pedagogical advice was sought from the experienced, the indefiniteness of the response would have been a credit to the oracles of ancient Greece. "Get them interested in their work," was the reply. Very good, but how? Where was the stable support upon which to rest the lever? Visits to the classes of other teachers showed the same condition of inattention to work. Some teachers were "securing the attention" by keeping the inattentive after school. It was noticeable, however, that the same children generally remained. Others were seeking to accomplish the desired result by sternness. But it was quite

evident that all were cherishing the fond delusion that their pupils were interested in their studies, whereas they were chiefly occupied with escaping the penalties of detection in their pranks.

Most of the children could repeat the lesson of the book, but the simplest question regarding cause and effect made it clear that they were repeating from memory, a feat in which children are astonishingly proficient. The teacher tried to follow the advice of his pedagogical Nestors, to make the work interesting, and here he made a discovery in child psychology. There was no difficulty in making a recitation interesting. Stories about the men or events of the lesson and bits of applied science in the science classes did that. The children sat agog during the recital. But the difficulty arose when he tried to carry this interest over into the drier facts and principles. The only portion of his contribution to the recitation which the children remembered on the following day were the historical and biographical stories and the striking applications of science. Their bearing upon the topics was forgotten, and the teacher was unable to see that the children studied their lessons more seriously because of the interest which the incidents awakened. The result forced the conviction that the momentary interest of the children, together with the teachers' enthusiasm

for the exposition, led to the delusion in the mind of those earnest but simple pedagogues that interest awakened by devices of this sort spreads over the whole work and increases the general efficiency of the children. The teacher became satisfied that the interest was supposititious, that even in the grammar school scholastic efficiency requires a more solid basis than involuntary attention. So he decided to break away from tradition and try an experiment. The situation seemed to warrant heroic treatment. The children were getting practically nothing and another plan could hardly give worse results.

Believing that the change would be more effective if the suggestion came from their leaders, the teacher invited three of the older boys to go fishing on a Saturday morning. No fish were caught, but every one had a good time and an opportunity to talk without the constraint of the school-room. The boys conversed freely, as is easy in the woods, and it was not long before they were telling their plans for the future. They did not think that they were getting much at school, a conclusion to which the teacher silently agreed, and they intended to leave as soon as their parents would give permission.

It was not difficult to convince them that skill in tracking questions to their solution and the

habit of accurate thinking would be serviceable in their practice of law and medicine, or in whatever occupation they might select. "But we don't do that," they said; "we just learn what the book says."

This was the opportunity for suggesting the new plan. It was put in the form of questions. Would they like it and would it work?

They thought it would be lots of fun and not a bit like school, but they didn't think some of the boys would study. This last was particularly entertaining since these three were the least studious and most troublesome in the school.

They were told that they could make it work if they would, but if they did not like the idea it had better not be tried.

The plan, in brief, was to organize the school into a club with elective officers. Every Saturday they would go into the woods to see what they could find for the science and geography classes. The club was to have charge of everything that concerned the school as a whole, and each class should decide by vote at the close of the recitation what things should be studied for the next day. The idea took hold of them at once. They decided that a captain was needed, and a staff, the members of which could be called upon for advice and assistance.



"Yes, and every one must obey the captain, just as in a ball game," exclaimed one.

The enthusiasm grew as the plan began to take form. They said that they would talk it over with the others and then call a meeting for general discussion and the election of officers.

During the next few days the school was filled with subdued excitement. Groups of children were standing around at recess in earnest discussion.

Finally, on the fourth day, a committee of boys went to the desk and asked if they might hold a meeting and would the teacher attend.

Of course he agreed, and when they had assembled at close of school he took a seat in the rear of the room.

It was a meeting that would have done any school-master good. Crimination of the system, of themselves and of their teacher who sat in the rear were blended in a medley.

But some of the older boys, those who had been on the fishing-trip, soon took the meeting in hand.

"This is our chance," they said. "Reciting the lesson don't do us any good if we don't study, and there isn't any fun always taking the next two pages. If the plan goes through we can say what we'll study." This last seemed to be the

convincing argument with several, and it made the teacher sceptical of the result.

At last the officers were elected. The captain detained his staff a moment for consultation.

The teacher remarked that as they were in charge now they must make the others play hard just as in foot-ball. And, of course, they must know much more about the lesson than the others so as to be able to direct, as the captain does on the field. The captain, who had never been caught working in the school, was very serious, and he took several books from the library, something that he had never done before.

When the class assembled on the following day the teacher took his seat on the benches with the pupils, remarking that he was now one of them, to be questioned with the others.

The subject was geography. One of the pupils asked a question which the captain volunteered to answer, and his knowledge was a wonder to those who knew his previous record. But this was only a part of the change. Each one had something to contribute to the answers given. Often the discussion was general, but there was no disorder. It was just enthusiasm for information.

The teacher's part in the work was inconspicuous. There was little for him to do. They had

consulted so many books that on several topics their information was more varied than his own, and it gave them great pleasure when he confessed ignorance. This pleasure, however, was quite different from that which comes with "catching the teacher." It was pride in achievement.

The work was serious and the interest intense. Would it extend to other classes and would it continue? There was nothing to do but wait.

The other classes through the day maintained the same vigor. In arithmetic the members of the staff assisted the captain in helping those in trouble, and in grammar the relations expressed by the several parts of the sentences never received more attention. The teacher was left free to give assistance where most needed.

The strange thing about it all, from the schoolmaster's point of view, was that, as time went on, the enthusiasm for study increased. The children took a different attitude toward their work. There was no comfort for shirkers. The general smile that frequently greeted failures under the old method was distressingly absent. Not to know one's lesson was unpleasant. And yet more work was assigned than the teacher had ever dared to give.

The officers acted as a kind of committee of

safety. Everything that interfered with what the pupils had organized to do was referred to them. If any criticism of their decisions is justified, it is that they tended toward undue severity in their judgments. They did not always take the personal equation of the offender into account. They were more inclined to make the punishment fit the crime than the boy. This, however, did not have the disastrous effect that is likely to follow a similar error on the part of a teacher. The children accepted the verdict as though it were a retribution of nature for violating her immutable laws. The penalty was painful but necessary.

If complaints were brought to the teacher, he refused to consider them until the officers had acted. Most of the irritations among school children, as elsewhere, are trivial. When the teacher may be held responsible the annoyances are exaggerated. This is because of the state of armed truce between pupils and teacher. If an elected body of their own associates is responsible, the children easily adapt themselves to their decisions whichever way they may fall.

The officers felt actively responsible for the success of whatever was undertaken, and the sentiment of fair play served to compel the others to unite in their support. This feeling of responsibility extended to the studies and stimulated each

to do the best of which he was capable. It relieved the teacher of many cares and made him a leader instead of a driver. The children were continually hunting for information and interpretations which they could contribute to the common fund of knowledge. The text-book ceased to be the one thing studied, and "the lesson" was no longer committed to memory. The captain and his staff changed in a single day what the teacher had vainly striven for two months to alter.

The experiment was suggested by the belief that permanent interest must rest upon something more substantial than involuntary attention secured through attractive devices in the recitation. This sort of interest lacks durable qualities. It encourages the demand for entertainment and dulls the sensitiveness for less diverting knowledge. The racial instinct to do things, to investigate, to control and to be controlled by the common sentiment of their fellows, seems, on the other hand, to furnish a solid basis for interest. The studies of the school then gain all the enthusiasm which attends self-imposed activities.

We have seen that with the growth in complexity of the nervous system, animals become more responsive to their environment. Stimuli have

more meaning for them. Among the lower animals, in their native habitat, the sole purpose of successful response we have found to be survival. But with the advent of civilization intelligent purpose should replace the blind impulses which primitive man inherited from his lower kin.

Increased adaptive flexibility means an enlarged educational capacity. More physical and mental adjustments are at the disposal of teachers. This is one of the differences between the lower animals and man, as well as between primitive and civilized races. Animals and primitive man have each their own limits of expansion and no system of education can carry them beyond these confines. The bounds of civilized man, however, have been greatly enlarged through his improved cerebral organization. But this highly differentiated nervous system to which man is heir requires for its complete growth a correspondingly varied environment. A structure which has attained such marvellous complexity by battling with nature's forces through the ages, cannot be conserved on a starvation allowance of stimuli. As adequate excitations are needed for its preservation in the individual as were required for its acquisition by the race. The difference is that the events and situations which are to act as stimuli must now be purposive—definitely planned

to accomplish human ends. This is the part which intelligence should play in promoting growth during immaturity. Nature met the earlier needs of man, but her aim was satisfied with the product of her unintelligent, non-moral forces. Thinking beings were only an incident in her programme. But after all, self-consciousness must have some evolutionary reason for existing and its justifications would seem to be the part that it may play in furthering the evolution of the species which possesses it. Since, then, nature has no interest in human ideals, man himself must take advantage of the intelligence which fortuitous variation has produced to promote his own evolution. And this involves selection of incentives to growth.

Now the range of adaptations in the school is too limited. I do not mean that the studies are few. Subjects of study may or may not act as stimuli. The mere facts that they are in the curriculum and that the children attend the classes do not make them developing forces. This effectiveness depends upon the relation of the individual to the situations of which they form a part. Let us illustrate again by reference to the lower animals. Jackals have probably played no essential part in the evolution of lions, but lions, on the other hand, have doubtless been a very important

factor in producing the cowardly, sneaking characteristics of jackals. Some forces in nature are passive as regards certain animals, though these animals live in constant contact with them. Whatever influence these forces possess depends upon their relation to the requirements of the animals for survival. Among the lower animals this relation is settled by nature, who is a relentless school-master. In man, however, the test of an influence is not so clear. Adaptation here is not a fixed response to a given set of conditions. For this reason one cannot always determine in advance the sort of conditions which are needed in a given instance. The great variety of human temperaments requires variations in stimuli for the attainment of the same result. Experiments are often necessary. These require flexibility in the system. But the schools are rigid. This results in lack of adjustment with accompanying mental irritation, if not truancy and incorrigibility.

Experiments, however, must have a purpose. It is necessary to know what one is trying to do. And it is just here that teachers have shown least intelligence. Modern educational theory and practice are contradictory. Ask the purpose of education and the answer will always be in terms of ability to do things. No other answer is possible when we remember how soon facts and in-



formation are forgotten. Yet, in practice, teachers are chiefly concerned with the content of knowledge. When you ask of them the reason for their inconsistency the reply always is: "We are required to finish the book by the end of the year."

The inadequacy of the school as a place where boys may be stimulated to thought and action is illustrated by the following instance which can be reproduced many times in all essential respects from any school.

"The boy hated anything connected with study, school, or teachers. The parents never inquired why this was so, and could not give a reason. He had nothing against his teachers, *except as they represented the school.*<sup>1</sup> The parents, believing in education, had no fault to find with the school, and were able and willing to send him another year. But each morning he had to be urged and driven to school. Otherwise he was one of the best boys imaginable, helping his mother to take care of the little ones, and bringing in coal, wood, etc. He would coax her to let him stay away from school and offer to do the washing, wheel the baby all day around the door-yard, and do any work or anything she wanted him to do if he could stay away from his books. His parents

<sup>1</sup> The italics in this quotation are the author's.

were anxious for him to stand as well in school as his elder brothers and sisters, but they saw it was of no use; he simply could not learn; even the alphabet, they said, was incomprehensible. He got along with figures a little better. When he was old enough to get his working-papers his father and mother discussed the situation, and very reluctantly consented to allow him to go to work. Three months previous to his birthday he began a systematic visiting of the machine-rooms in different mills and found a position that suited him in the same industry, but not in the same mill," in which his father was employed. He promptly took the position one week after leaving school. "What he had learned in the three months of observation and visiting among the machinists enabled him to take an unusually advanced position, causing considerable surprise to his parents, who had begun to think him hopelessly dull. He has advanced in knowledge of machinery so much within the past eight months that his employer has offered to have him taught the machinist's trade at his own expense. . . . *In the mean time he has begun to see the application of figures in mechanics, and studies his arithmetic whenever he can.* He is entirely changed, his mother says, alert and quick where he used to be dull, and much happier, always up early and ready to

go to work, and 'does not work with his eyes on the clock.'"<sup>1</sup>

The value of handwork as a mental stimulus for boys has been demonstrated also in Muskegon, Michigan. From the time of the introduction of manual training in the high school the total enrolment and average attendance has steadily increased though the number of children of school age, as shown by the school census, has decreased each year. The cause of this increase in the high school cannot be explained by the change in the character of the population because, as the lumber interests declined, factories have taken their places, and factory workmen are not conspicuous for sending their children to the high school. Superintendent Frost, in speaking of the effect of manual work upon the boys, says<sup>2</sup> that "they are able to interpret the meaning of a high school course through the contact with life which they get by means of the work taken in the manual-training school."

The cases which we have just cited are illustrations of one way of making some boys think. But while manual training should be taken by all children and trade schools should be a part of

<sup>1</sup> United States Commissioner of Labor: "Report on Condition of Woman and Child Wage-earners in the United States," vol. VII, p. 118. Washington, 1910.

<sup>2</sup> Letter to the author.

the public-school system, their introduction does not quash the indictment against the schools. Indeed many teachers of these subjects are already demonstrating that manual training may be made as much of a bore as anything else. Like the public-school teachers of sciences,<sup>1</sup> they are driving the children from their classes. A prevalent error among school men is the belief that some magic device may yet be discovered which will stem the tide that is setting in against them. Not long ago nature study was to be the savior of their system. But nature with all her life and beauty soon withered under the blighting hand of formalism. Only thinking teachers can make children think. And the first requisite for free interplay of thoughts is release from the suffocating atmosphere of the school consciousness. Children are mentally asphyxiated by the noxious air of pedantry.

It is an accepted principle in psychology that physiological processes underlie mental processes. If we try to picture to ourselves the physiological condition which represents the neural side of the school consciousness, two facts at once disclose themselves: the emotional attitude and inhibitory impulses. If we accept the James-Lange view of

<sup>1</sup> For proof of this statement regarding the sciences, see "Report of the United States Commissioner of Education, 1910," vol. II, p. 1139.

the emotions, and some form of this theory is at present the only intelligible statement of the affective side of the mental life, they reduce to one, since inhibitory impulses then become a part of the emotional response. The physiological aspect of the school consciousness is, then, neural resistance or obstruction. Nervous centres refuse to send out the impulses which would excite other centres and by cerebral association produce, in turn, related ideas. Again, counter-currents may be sent out which not only oppose the desired action, but, besides, lead to adverse responses. Under these conditions the brain becomes a storm centre of opposing and aberrant nervous impulses, and the mind loses all docility.

Thinking involves association of ideas and, as we have seen, the law of association is primarily a neural matter. "When two elementary brain processes have been active together or in immediate succession, one of them on reoccurring tends to propagate its excitement into the other," is the way in which James has described it. Retention and recall are also dependent upon cerebral processes. The excitement of a group of cells connected with the idea in consciousness spreads to other cells the activity of which results in the appearance in consciousness of associated ideas. This is the way in which it works out when there

is no interference with cerebral habits. But nervous processes are exceedingly sensitive to outer conditions. A man who has made careful preparation for a public address finds that his ideas do not readily come when he stands before his audience. Again, there are persons in whose presence our thoughts refuse to freely flow. Perhaps it is from embarrassment, or we may be vaguely conscious of lack of sympathy with our views. The cause does not matter. The fact is the important thing. The nerve centres for the time seem paralyzed. They refuse to act. The moment we are alone or with a sympathetic friend, the neural dam is broken and we think of a dozen answers which we might have given in reply to the objections that were raised.

A physician with a large operative practice has told the writer of a prolonged state of cerebral inhibition under circumstances in which it would be least expected. When he tried to dictate the description of his clinical cases to his stenographer, ideas refused to come. He found it impossible to think out the description of his cases or the changes produced by the operation, though in the presence of physicians he talked fluently about them. When he analyzed the cause he found that it was embarrassment produced by the feeling that his stenographer might not think highly of his opinion. It

was only after an extended treatment by auto-suggestion that he overcame the cerebral resistance. Before beginning to dictate he repeated to himself many times that any one who would work for fifty dollars a month was so stupid that his opinion was not worth considering.

Children are especially sensitive to these mental disturbances. Opposing nervous currents and inhibitions are easily produced. Sometimes it is the business attitude of teachers toward their work which causes the trouble. Many teach because it is the most convenient way of earning a living. They instruct as they would dig ditches, anxious merely to do as much as will enable them to draw their wages. "Latin would be so interesting," said a boy of thirteen, "if my teacher only seemed to love it."

Another instance was reported to the writer of a young woman who was teaching in a small high school. She was just out of college and was so full of enthusiasm for her work that she could not resist the pleasure of talking about it with her associates. "You will not be so enthusiastic after you have taught fifteen years," replied one who had had the long experience so often thought to enhance the value of a teacher.

Again, it is lack of interest in the children's sports which starts opposing nervous currents A

young women free from the ennui of years of drudgery in traditional methods introduced the startling innovation in her school of attending the baseball games of her pupils. Her first appearance on the field created such a sensation that she heard about it from many parents. And the attitude of her pupils changed at once. She was now one of them. Her school-room was no longer an ogre's den.

If children are to do their best work mental restraints must be removed so as to give free play to associative processes. So long as the teacher and pupils are in opposing camps, secret or open warfare will be waged. And this feeling of hostility creates an attitude of resistance which inhibits the effective interaction of nervous currents. Thoughtful teachers admit this opposition of interests. Those who deny it do so because of the implication that they are unsuccessful. So they continue to chatter about the delight of their pupils in their studies. But one has only to attend their classes or hear the children talk among themselves to dispel the delusion.

We have indicated by illustrative examples various ways in which the resistance of pupils may be overcome. Put in general terms the problem is to break down the distinction between school-work and the activities in which children engage



among themselves. To accomplish this, the school must be made more like life in the larger world. The school consciousness is an artificial product which exists nowhere else. It is the result of the tradition that children do not wish to study and that consequently they must be compelled to endure the agony. Joined with this tradition is the belief that drudgery increases the value of the training. That which is pleasant is thought to lose efficiency in proportion to the joy that it gives the pupils. A prominent historian once told a friend of the writer that if he thought his books were interesting he would destroy them. It is needless to say that neither this historian nor many writers in other fields have any present occasion to begin a wholesale destruction of their books.

But pleasant and easy, as the writer has said elsewhere,<sup>1</sup> are not synonyms. One is often amazed at the difficulty of the tasks which children undertake. Their available energy seems inexhaustible when they have freedom to act and interact among themselves. They then build up a system of ideas and standards which appeal to them because they grow out of their own complex social relations. Some of these ideas and standards pass away and are replaced by others

<sup>1</sup> "Mind in the Making," p. 113.

because they do not fit the needs of the children. But through it all there is a constructive growth in habits of work. When minds have free interplay, variations occur in methods of doing the things in which each one has a share, and the ways which "do not work" are discarded for those that do. Pleasure in the activity is important here because it stimulates the nerve centres. The selection of ways and means by the learner is also in better accord with the needs of the situation when he enjoys his occupation. Under free interplay of nervous impulses the disadvantageous factors in the learning process are more quickly eliminated. Put in simpler language, enthusiasm frees the mind from restraints.

Throughout the animal kingdom, stimuli are allurements to an increase of vital action in the organism. Among lower forms, as we have seen, death is the penalty for those who do not accept the offer. In man, punishment at first took the place of the death penalty inflicted by nature upon recalcitrants. Now that civilization has advanced beyond this stage, some incentive to adaptation must replace the earlier, cruder forces. And the stimuli consciously applied should have a definite purpose. In other words, teachers should first find out what they are trying to do with their pupils, and when they have ascertained this

they should plan situations which will stir the children's zeal for action. The racial and social instincts are exhaustless storage-batteries of nervous energy, and it is direction of these forces rather than restraint that is needed in the schools. It is no idle charge that teachers do not know what they are trying to do. One needs but to read the pedagogical literature and attend the institutes to see how indefinite are their purposes. Vague phrases about mental discipline and moral training have long been the school-masters' chief asset. It is time for them to take an account of stock and reorganize before the outraged public puts the schools in the hands of receivers.

Definite rules of action for tapping the reservoirs of racial and social energy cannot be given. It is largely a matter of personality and tact in dealing with children. But the first requirement in the teacher is to remove the coating of pedagogical tradition. Then he is ready to absorb modern ideas. If such a teacher determines to find a plan which will create in the children the same enthusiasm for school-work as they have for their own activities, he will know when he has succeeded. The examples which have been given indicate the method.

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